DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 282 CG 016 876

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Fortune, Marie M.; Hormann, Denise |
| TITLE | Family Violence: A Workshop Manual for Clergy and Other Service Providers. |
| INSTITUTION | Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (Dept. of Justice), Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | 82 |
| GRANT | LEAA-79-DF-AX-0237 |
| NOTE | 121p.; Formerly published under the title, "Family Violence: A Workshop Manual for Rural Communities." |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC05 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Battered Women; *Child Abuse; Clergy; Community Education; *Community Involvement; Family Problems; Human Services; *Religious Organizations; Resource Materials; *Rural Areas; Training Methods; *Workshops |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Family Violence |

ABSTRACT

This workshop manual is an education and training resource tool for the religious community, both individuals and groups, working to mobilize resources in response to sexual and domestic violence in rural areas. The first section presents an approach to education and training on family violence (goals; where to begin, how to proceed, and why; cautions for workshop design; a discussion of values and principles); an outline of workshop goals and objectives; and tips for workshop planning and workshop leaders. Section 2 presents models for a 1-day workshop (focusing primarily on spouse battering), and for a 3-day workshop (focusing on spouse abuse, child abuse, and religious issues and local strategies). The format for the models consists of time recommendations, content and procedures, and materials needed for each area of content and procedure. In addition to the two models, information on general public presentations is included to aid local planning committees or task groups in preparing their presentations. Sample presentations and commentaries for a 1-day workshop on topics including a response to family violence, the person who batters, victims of spouse abuse, the incest offender, non-offending parents of incest victims, and commentaries on religious and rural issues in family violence are also provided. The appendix contains descriptions of six successful rural family violence programs, including contact people for further information; an annotated bibliography with information on incest, spouse abuse, religious issues, and other resources; a questionnaire on family violence; workshop evaluation forms; sample brochure and registration form; and reprints of four articles on domestic violence. (JAC)

ED234282

# Family Violence

## A Workshop Manual for Clergy and Other Service Providers

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The Center for the Prevention
of Sexual and Domestic Violence

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*Family Violence: A Workshop Manual for Rural Communities*



CG 016876

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This manual was prepared with support from Grant Number 79-DF-AX-0237 awarded to the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are entirely those of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence and not necessarily those of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the Department of Justice, DHHS, NCCAN, or Aspen Systems Corporation.

First Printing, 1980
Second Printing, 1981
Third Printing, 1982

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# Acknowledgements

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions made by the following persons to the completion of the **Workshop Manual:**

Jeanne Sack, Curriculum Consultant
Susan Blake, Editor
Karen Jensen-Mather, Sherri McCausland, and Debbie Thurston, Typists
Kathleen Anne Kinney, Illustrations, 1978

Carol Adams, Dr. Anne L. Ganley, and Judith Hertz, Primary Contributors

Dr. Vicki Boyd, Karil Klingbeil, Doris Stevens, Diane Hamlin, Jeannie Santos, and participants in the Pilot Workshops across the United States whose energy, time, and ideas helped develop and refine this material.

The National Advisory Committee to the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence (1979-1980) represented major denominational bodies in the United States and provided helpful review of the Workshop Manual draft. Its members included:

Carol Adams, Chautauqua County Rural Ministries, Inc.
Yolanda Bako, Volunteers Against Violence Technical Assistance Program, American Friends
Anne Wellesley Bellew, Presbyterian Church — U.S.
Bro. Joseph Berg, National Conference of Catholic Charities
Rev. Carol Brown, Presbyterian Church — U.S.
Marge Christi, Episcopal Church
Miriam Corbett, American Baptist Church
Rev. Ralph Dietrick, Church of the Brethern
Rev. Nancy Heimer, Christian Church — Disciples of Christ
Judith Hertz, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods
Rev. Joan Martin, National Council of Churches
Dr. Nanette Roberts, United Church of Christ
Dr. Joe A. Serig, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Rev. G. William Sheek, National Council of Churches
Liz Verdesi, United Presbyterian Church — USA
Peggy Halsey, United Methodist Church
Edna Wagschal, Lutheran Church in America
Mary Ann Walt, American Lutheran Church

Mark Dion, Administrative Assistant at the Center, (1979-1980) whose continuous support and assistance was much needed and appreciated.

Cheryl Ellsworth, Jim Benbow, Ruth Teichroeb, Beth Wieman, Marie Vanbronkhorst whose proofreading helped us to finish on time

We are especially grateful to clients, parishoners, and congregants who have known family violence in their lives and whose stories and insights have broadened our knowledge and understanding of the problem.

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"Sticks and Stones Break More Than Bones," Thomas McKenzie

# Introduction

Family violence — physical assault, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, destruction of property and/or pets — is a relentlessly democratic activity. It cuts across geographic, religious, economic, race, sex and age barriers. Research indicates that violence in families is a major social problem in the U.S.:

- "A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky" (July, 1979), found that 21% or over 169,000 of the married women in that state reported being victims of at least one incident of physical violence; 1 in 10 of them reported an incident within the last year.[1]
- A nationwide survey of the extent of spouse abuse indicates that 1.8 million wives are beaten by their husbands each year. The true rate of violence is probably closer to 50-60% of all couples, than it is to the 28% who are willing to describe the violent acts in a mass interview survey.[2]
- The U.S. Department of Justice reports that the possibility of an actual attack and the likelihood of sustaining injury because of an attack increases with the level of intimacy within the victim-offender's relationship.[3]
- One in five female children and one in eleven male children will be sexually abused by the age of 18 years.[4] Almost half of the sexual abuse of children is due to incest.[5]

The price of being raised in a violent home is great for all of its members and to society as a whole. Children who are abused or witness abuse in the family are likely to grow up and become abusive themselves.

The ideas, people, and energy needed to decrease acceptance of violence in families are available, if we work together. But by refusing to accept any responsibility for the conditions that condone the battering of spouses and elderly adults and the physical and sexual abuse of children, we allow such abuse to continue. We allow it to continue by taking refuge in ideas that excuse us from action: that violence among humans is inevitable, that violence in families is not widespread and is to be expected, that decreasing the amount of violence in the world is too overwhelming, or that eliminating family violence is impossible.

We must challenge these ideas in order to eliminate violence and abuse from family life.

## Why Focus on Rural Areas?

Family violence is a serious problem in rural communities. This manual focuses on family violence in rural communities, not because the problem is **more** prevalent there than in suburban or urban communities, but because some aspects of it and its solutions are **unique to the rural setting** and little attention has been given to the needs of rural communities in addressing family violence.

Confronting family violence in rural areas raises specific issues with which community education must deal. This manual is intended for use by groups in rural communities who are interested in learning more about and/or providing training specific to family violence. Please note that family violence is as varied in rural areas as elsewhere and the examples used do not represent all rural areas all the time. (Although the manual focuses on rural concerns, much of the material is applicable to non-rural communities as well.)

The criminal justice, social service and mental health systems ordinarily utilized in an urban setting to respond to family violence problems are often not available in a rural setting. Few law enforcement personnel may cover a broad territory; social service and mental health workers may only be available to a community periodically, as they may be responsible for an entire county or region. Even when services **are** available in a rural community, they may be underutilized by the people who need them. Social service providers may not be seen as credible resources but rather regarded as "outsiders," especially if they do not reside in the community itself. Those who reside in the community may distrust the social service workers because they fear that confidentiality will not be respected. Consequently, those who need help do not seek it.

The need to focus on the specifics of responding to family violence **in the rural setting** is apparent.

## Why Focus on the Religious Community?

Since there is clearly a need for effective services in rural communities in response to family violence and since the limitations of the social service and legal systems make an effective response from these sources difficult, an alternative approach is needed: often

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[1] U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, *A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky*, 1979, p. 1.

[2] Murray A. Straus, "Wife Beating: How Common and Why?" *Victimology: An International Journal*, Vol. 2, 1977-78, No. 3-4, pp. 443-458.

[3] U.S. Department of Justice, "Intimate Victims: A Study of Violence Among Friends and Relatives," January 1980, p. 13.

[4] Finklehor, D. *Sexually Victimized Children*, The Free Press, New York, 1979.

[5] Sexual Assault Center, Harborview Medical Center, caseload statistics for 1979, children 16 years of age and under, Seattle, WA 1979.

churches and synagogues can provide a viable approach. Churches and synagogues are established, credible institutions in most rural communities in which the majority of the population participate. Religious professionals are members of the community who already do counseling with families. In many areas they can provide a network of people who, when trained to deal with family violence, can be valuable resources for responding to the problem and providing useful linkages to criminal justice, social service and mental health systems. However, religious professionals who are untrained and unaware of the dynamics of family violence can seriously exacerbate the problems faced by family members. This manual is offered as a model to train and mobilize the religious community within rural areas so they can address family violence through their cooperation with existing services. (Although this approach focuses on the religious community, none of the activities described in the manual are related to the teaching of religious doctrine.) Family violence is a problem of both the religious and secular communities and this manual is designed to integrate their needs, approaches and resources.

## The Religious Response to Family Violence

Traditionally, the religious community has responded to family violence with silence, a silence which suggests complicity in perpetuating the patterns of chronic abuse in families.

The religious community needs to respond with active involvement for two reasons. First, members of the religious community are themselves victims and abusers in families who, because of the silence, hesitate to seek assistance from their minister/priest/rabbi or congregation. Thus, the mistaken belief that family violence doesn't happen here ("in my congregation, my family, my town") gets reinforced. In fact, there are many active members of the religious community (clergy and lay) who are members of abusive families.

Secondly, religious concerns arise in the midst of family violence crises for those who come from a religious background and/or are currently active in a congregation. These theological and pastoral issues need to be effectively addressed in the context of the person's own religious tradition and activity. (See "A Commentary on Religious Issues and Family Violence")

Experiences of violence and abuse within the family strike at the very core of individual and family life and can be much more devastating than violence between strangers. The impact is expressed in Psalm 55:4-8, 12-14, 16:

> "My heart is in anguish within me,
> the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
> Fear and trembling come upon me,
> and horror overwhelms me.
> And I say, 'O that I had wings like a dove!
> I would fly away and be at rest;
> yea, I would wander afar,
> I would lodge in the wilderness,
> I would haste to find me a shelter
> from the raging wind and tempest.' "
>
> "It is not an enemy who taunts me —
> then I could bear it;
> it is not an adversary who deals
> insolently with me —
> then I could hide from him.
> But it is you, my equal,
> my companion, my familiar friend.
> We used to hold sweet converse together;
> within God's house we walked in
> fellowship."
>
> "But I call upon God;
> and the Lord will save me."

The place where one expects to find nurture, care, and intimacy is in fact, for many people, a place of violence. The trust placed in one's family is betrayed by the abuse.

Family violence is destroying families. Religious institutions and agencies are concerned with saving families: they need to place a high priority on the needs of people suffering from family violence and on programs which seek to prevent its occurrence.

Unfortunately, in some situations, scripture and theology have been misused by the abuser to justify continued violence in the family. This misuse has resulted from the lack of understanding of the nature and causes of family violence and its potential lethality. This lack of understanding is a direct result of the silence within the religious community for many, many years.

Clergy, lay persons, congregations, and religious agencies have a major responsibility to become aware of family violence and to actively address the problem in congregations and communities. The religious community has a great potential for becoming a vital resource to families mired in a cycle of violence. The religious community is in a position to intervene and assist families to stop abuse and to create healthy living environments for adults, teenagers, and children.

## The Manual Itself

*Family Violence: A Workshop Manual for Rural Communities* is designed to be used as a resource tool by individuals and groups working on family violence in rural areas. A local Family Violence Task Force or a

workshop leader or trainer can use this manual to present various workshop formats in a local community setting. The manual describes some of the activities involved in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating workshops on family violence for religious and secular professionals and paraprofessionals. Sample presentations are included, along with articles on family violence to be used for background material and handouts.

The *Workshop Manual* was developed by the staff of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence and is based on pilot workshops which were presented during 1979-80. We believe this manual will contribute to addressing the widespread problem of family violence, particularly in rural areas. Through it, we share what we have learned with the hope that it will facilitate the efforts of others who seek to decrease violence in the family.

# I. Background and Planning

*This section contains:*

An Approach to Education and Training on Family Violence

Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

Workshop Planning

Tips for Workshop Leaders

# An Approach to Education and Training on Family Violence

*This section of the Workshop Manual provides the general background and rationale for our approach to the workshop process. It clarifies the assumptions and values we bring to the workshop. We advocate our approach because we have found it to be effective in our own experience. We discourage using other approaches which we have found to be less effective.*

*This section is the foundation upon which the rest of the manual stands. The actual detail for planning and implementation of the workshop follows in other sections and is referred to in parentheses at specific points.*

## Goals

Goals for the training event are jointly set by the Planning Committee and workshop leaders. These goals must be clearly identified by the leaders and must be realistic to the needs and potential of the group participants. (see "Workshop Planning")

The materials provided in this manual support the following overall goals for the workshop:

- To increase the participants' AWARENESS of the nature and extent of family violence;
- To develop COOPERATION between the religious and secular communities in dealing with family violence;
- To enlist participants' INVOLVEMENT in addressing family violence within their own community.

These overall goals are mutually dependent.

The purpose of increasing participants' awareness is to get them to respond to family violence. However, their response will be effective only if they are better informed about the problem and are willing to work co-operatively with others.

These goals can be implemented in different ways and to various extents depending upon the group and the amount of time available for the workshop. In any case, the workshop process should reflect these primary goals, regardless of time, group composition or other factors.

You may have additional sub-goals or objectives which you want to accomplish during the workshop. For example, you may want to enhance participants' counseling skills specific to family violence, so that more people in the community will be prepared to assist families dealing with the problem.

Feel free to add sub-goals or objectives which address the needs of people you expect to participate.

## Where to Begin, How to Proceed, and Why

Begin where people are, not where you wish they were. In the beginning, we assume that:

1. Participants need basic factual information about family violence because, like everyone else, they are probably misinformed to some degree about the subject.
2. Participants bring their personal feelings, fears, anxieties, experiences, biases, and assumptions about family violence to the workshop and speak from this context.
3. Participants are genuinely concerned about the problem of family violence (based on their perception of it) and want to help.
4. Participants feel initially reserved and hesitant in a group setting until they become oriented to the group.

The workshop models included in this manual are based upon the assumptions delineated above. The workshop as it is organized is the vehicle through which we seek to implement the ultimate goal of reducing family violence in rural communities.

**Introductions** (see Workshop Model, DAY 1). Workshop leaders introduce themselves or are introduced providing relevant information to the group including credentials (academic and/or experiential), basis for interest in working on family violence, appreciation for opportunity to be with the group, etc. Participants then introduce themselves by name, role and/or place of work or activity, and interest in family violence.

*This allows leaders to set a tone for the day, to begin to establish credibility and expertise, and to make a personal connection to the group. Participants' introductions break the ice, involve everyone early, and give a clear sense of which agencies, groups, or interests are present.*

**Definition** (see Workshop Model, DAY 1 and Sample presentation, "The Person Who Batters"). Leaders present a **descriptive** definition of family violence to which they and participants can refer throughout the workshop.

*A descriptive definition is inclusive of what violent families are experiencing and it avoids, at this point, a subjective evaluation of the problem. It simply states what is in fact occurring in violent families and thus leaves little ground for dispute. The definition becomes a common reference point for the group.*

**Early Learning About Family Violence** (see Workshop Model, DAY 1). Participants identify their earliest memories of learning about family violence -- what it is, how it was referred to, in what context, etc. (Use a small group sharing exercise).

*Most people have received some common messages about family violence during their lives. This exercise helps people to look at their own assumptions and to identify with the assumptions of others, thus realizing that we do in fact start from a similar set of beliefs about family violence. People are not expected to discuss personal experiences of family violence at this point. The exercise is non-threatening and begins to build community in the group.*

**Detailed Information About Family Violence** (see Workshop Model, DAY 1). Leaders introduce the subject of family violence; specific information is divided into manageable sub-topics. Use a variety of techniques (lecture, discussion, films, brainstorm, etc.). If the training is addressed to clergy, counselors, police, or others who work directly with families experiencing violence, include information specifically relating to counseling issues and referrals.

*Most people have very little factual information about family violence. This segment offers information which challenges myths and stereotypes and develops a common base of information from which to work. Participants will learn about the nature, extent, and dynamics of family violence and whom it affects.*

**Rural Issues: Concerns and Resources** (see Workshop Model, DAY 2). Participants apply what they are learning about family violence to their own experience in a rural community. They examine the effect that their rural setting has on lessening or aggravating the problem and they identify which particular resources are readily available or unavailable in their own communities. Utilize leader presentation and small group work.

*This segment provides an opportunity for participants to assimilate new information and to assess for themselves both the difficulties and resources they face in working on family violence in their area. Through this discussion they will discover unexpected new resources in themselves and others which can offset a tendency to feel overwhelmed by the problem.*

**Developing a Cooperative Approach between Religious and Secular Communities** (see Workshop Model, DAY 3). Encourage cooperation between secular and religious participants by opening up dialogue among participants from these two groups. Air any areas of conflict. Discuss both the resources and limitations present for each sub-group represented: religious community, mental health and social service, criminal justice, etc.

*By this point, the group has established some sense of common responsibility for dealing with the problem of family violence and is prepared to seek joint solutions. When both the religious and secular sectors make a commitment to exploring both resources and limitations, each is helped to take responsibility for its shortcomings and for the significant contributions it can make to reducing family violence.*

Do not single out either the religious or the secular sector for blame regarding the cause of family violence, or for insensitivity and lack of responsiveness. Rather, review and discuss areas of limitation simultaneously. For example:

*When* the religious community *has had opportunities to respond constructively to situations of family violence, it has often been hesitant, silent, or sometimes destructive in its response to family violence due to its limited view of women and marriage.*

*The* social service and mental health communities *also have not identified family violence itself as a problem, but have approached it as a relational issue, an approach which has proven ineffective. They have often viewed any religious expression or concern by clients as irrelevant if not suspect.*

*These two groups in particular have often viewed each other more as adversaries than as allies in serving the needs of violent families.*

*Similarly, most people view the* criminal justice system *as a community institution which often responds inappropriately to family violence.*

A critique of the historic and contemporary shortcomings of each of these groups is important in order to correct some of these areas and to get on with the joint task of a cooperative approach. No professional or paraprofessional group has effectively responded to family violence. That is why the problem is rampant today. But a constructive, cooperative approach is possible **if** there is a shared acknowledgement that **each** group represented brings skills and resources which are vitally necessary for an effective response to the problem of family violence.

**Leaders and Participants: Religious and Secular.** A workshop leadership team which represents both the religious and secular communities is very helpful.

*A team composed of a clergy or layperson and a social worker or secular counselor can provide a self-critical and self-affirming, competent approach to family violence which is a valuable model for the group of how the two can work together.*

The advantage of a mixture of participants from the various sub-groups in the secular and religious communities becomes apparent in the course of the workshop. There may be areas of real conflict of values or approach between the different groups. Participants are usually ready and able to deal with these with some facilitation by the group leaders.

*Face to face dialogue and negotiations begin to develop a cooperative approach. Members of all sub-groups represented begin to be recognized for their competence and skills and their particular concerns or hesitations can be lifted up and addressed jointly by the group. They begin to realize that they need each other as resources.*

**Religious Issues in Family Violence** (see Workshop Model, DAY 3 and "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence"). After providing information on family violence, deal with religious issues which arise for victims or those who abuse in the family.

*Presenting religious issues towards the end of the workshop enables participants to deal with these issues out of a new knowledge base and thus to approach them more effectively.*

Approach these issues as a common concern for all participants and look for shared solutions to the religious questions clients may raise.

*This approach encourages secular helpers to acknowledge the importance of religious issues for clients and to take some responsibility for addressing them. It also provides time for religious helpers to address these questions and enable them to be more effective in their counseling.*

**Encouraging Involvement and Action** (see Workshop Model, DAY 3). Assist participants in identifying their skills and exploring ways they can resource each other to better serve violent families. Affirm and reinforce the unique skills and resources which each participant brings depending on their role and expertise in the community: the social worker who works for a state Child Protection Agency and has legal authority to intervene in child abuse cases, or the clergy person who serves a local parish and who also may be willing to serve on the Board of the crisis line or will take referrals to deal with religious issues, or the community mental health worker who may be setting up a group for abused women, or the lay person from a congregation who volunteers her home as a safe home. Each of these persons can contribute significant resources.

*Identification of the particular skills and resources of participants encourages their involvement and their willingness to share these resources. The identification process makes clear the valuable resources already present in the community and that no one person or group would be called on to do it all. The participants then begin to feel like they can do something about what is otherwise an overwhelming problem.*

*This step is possible because the group now has a common knowledge base, a common experience working together in the workshop, and a common commitment to work together on the problem.*

Provide an opportunity in this workshop for participants from each local community (if more than one community is represented) to strategize together for their next 6-12 months of activity in their own setting. Encourage the groups to set realistic goals and objectives, to possibly establish a working committee or task force if none currently exists, to identify and assign tasks for committee members, to develop new services, or to better coordinate present services.

*The strategy development provides a concrete process by which participants can continue to work together after the workshop is completed; they provide their own answers to "what happens next?" and are accountable to each other for this.*

## Cautions for Workshop Design

In our experiences conducting workshops with local groups about family violence, we have found several approaches which are less successful than others. From these experiences, the following cautions:

1. In order to enlist the support of the religious, human services, and criminal justice communities, begin with a positive approach.

*Do* **not** *begin with a head-on critique of the inadequacies and insensitivities of any one of these groups. This kind of critique* **at the beginning of a workshop** *can quickly lead to defensive digging-in-of-heels and unwillingness to accept responsibility for owning the problem or finding solutions.*

2. Emphasize the "we" in an approach which expresses your attitude that "**We** are all here to learn what **we** can do together about family violence."

*Avoid setting up a "we-they" situation: "We are here to tell you what you don't know about family violence and help you shape up your act." This approach can create early resistance which can be very difficult to overcome.*

3. Deal with the political/social/economic analysis of the sources of family violence at some point **after** credibility has been established with the group.

*Avoid beginning with this analysis. Many people are unaccustomed to analyzing the roots of social, political, or economic problems. They are more likely to feel comfortable*

*examining these issues related to family violence as the workshop progresses and after leaders have established credibility with the group.*

Use terms which help people understand the issues but which avoid alienating them.

*"Sexism" and "feminism" are flag words and can create unnecessary resistance. This analysis, which views family violence in light of sexism, sex role stereotyping and the contributions of the women's movement to ending the abuse, is very important and should not be lost due to over-reactions to what some may regard as liberal rhetoric.*

Once they understand that family violence is a widespread problem which creates personal suffering for many, most people begin to ask, "Why is this happening?" At this point they become open to a political/social/economic analysis of the problem. As leaders, facilitate the group's identification and discussion of factors such as sexism, women's economic dependence, sex role stereotyping, and so forth as root causes contributing to family violence.

*Remember that increasing awareness, cooperation, and effecting change are the primary goals of the workshop. Analysis of issues is* **only** *important as it contributes to increased understanding and effective action.*

4. Begin by reflecting on concrete human experiences such as a story about an abused woman and relate them to basic information about the problem of family violence.

*Avoid beginning with an abstract, academic discourse on families, or violence in society, or sex role and stereotyping, or some other related but nonspecific topic.*

Each person attending carries some agenda related to "What do I do when an abused person or an abuser seeks my help?" These people are often on the front line and have faced or will face family violence as a crisis situation. They see the problem first of all in its personal, immediate manifestation. This is the best place to begin discussion. Beginning the workshop with abstract ideas tends to give the impression that this workshop will be irrelevant to the participants' needs. As the training progresses, however, they may begin to reflect on some of the abstract dimensions of family violence and want to explore these within the group. Thus, timing your approach to the material so that it complements the needs and interests of the participants is essential.

## Values and Principles

Our work on the problem of violence and abuse in the family is predicated on certain values and principles which guide our efforts. We include these here to clarify our basic premises for our readers.

1. **We believe that violence and abuse have no place in the family.** There is no legitimate justification for striking or otherwise abusing a family member. "People are not for hitting" under any circumstances is one way to express this value.[1] Hitting or abusing another person is a violation of that person's very self. Violence sets up and enforces an imbalance of power based on physical strength which minimizes the potential for trust, openness, and intimacy in the family.

The family is a place where conflict is inevitable. People who live in close proximity and emotional intimacy with one another will have conflicts. However, anger can be expressed and conflict dealt with creatively without violence. Children need discipline and guidance in order to learn how to relate to people and the world. We believe that parents are responsible for providing discipline and guidance and can do so most effectively if physical punishment is **not** the means used. Using physical punishment on a child teaches the child that it is okay to hit people you love for their own good. Physical punishment's unspoken message lasts much longer than any verbal statement a parent makes to accompany it.

The line between physical "discipline" and child abuse is too easily crossed. The National Council on Child Abuse and Neglect reports that society's encouragement of physical punishment of children is a factor leading to child abuse in our society.

2. **A strong, vocal public stance against violence in the family is needed.** Traditionally, violence committed against persons by strangers has been righteously condemned as a social evil which threatens our communities. All too often, however, violence in the family has been silently condoned and seen as no one else's business. Rarely has anyone asserted that "family life need not be violent and abusive."

Little has changed. This silence in response to violence and abuse in the family communicates a clear message that family violence is normal, to be expected in the family — this is just the way things are.

Opinion leaders in the community (ministers, rabbis, elected officials, teachers, and others) are in an excellent position to speak out **now** against family violence and to heighten public awareness of this issue. The message to the victim is: "you need not tolerate abuse any longer," to the abuser: "your abusive behavior must stop now," and to the whole

[1] John E. Valusek, *People Are Not For Hitting* (see Annotated Bibliography for detail)

community: "we all have a responsibility to help stop family violence."

3. **Families are the most important social unit in our communities.** Families, which come in many different forms, are the groupings from which we receive nurture and caring, through which we learn to share intimacy and trust. Many families do not fulfill these expectations; these families are in trouble and are literally being destroyed by violence and abuse.

The Center's work on the problem of family violence arises from our concern for families and for the individuals who live in them. In addition to serving the needs of families already trapped in violence, we must develop ways to strengthen families so that they do not enter into this vicious cycle of violence.

4. **The problem of family violence is a social problem, not an isolated, individual problem.** Personal incidents of family violence take place in a larger societal context.

- The stress which triggers violent incidents in families often results from extreme economic hardship (which now affects nearly all of us): inflation, unemployment, recession. Racial discrimination exacerbates all of these factors. Thus, as the economic situation worsens and racism becomes more overt, we see an increase in incidents of family violence.
- Political and social policy decisions create conditions which contribute to family violence. For example, the lack of quality child care often limits the possibility for both parents to work outside the home, thereby limiting the family to a single income. One income is no longer sufficient for most families with children. The lack of child care particularly affects abused wives who may stay in an abusive situation because they see no way that they can support and care for their children as single parents.
- Social attitudes which view women as second-class citizens (as evidenced by the volatile resistance to the ERA) reinforce a belief system which sees female victims of abuse as responsible for their own victimization. Some attitudes about marriage and family life still portray women and children as property. Unfortunately, these attitudes support a belief that a husband/father can do whatever he pleases with his wife and children without intervention from the outside.

5. **Preventing family violence means addressing the root causes of the problem.** In the short term, the needs of victims and abusers of family violence are the most urgent realities facing those in any community concerned about family violence. Damaged, broken people and families need services and support from congregations and communities. Our resources need to be directed towards those needs.

Services to victims and offenders help to heal some of the damage and hopefully offer individuals an alternative to further abuse. However, this help is not enough because it does not stop the problem of family violence.

In the long term, effective prevention is only accomplished by changing the attitudes and conditions which foster family violence and by teaching people early in their lives to behave in non-abusive ways in relationships with others. Education and skills training (for example in communication, assertion, anger control, etc.) are means to this end.

This Workshop Manual does not provide for any in-depth discussion of prevention in the workshop format. Time does not allow it. The Center's work during 1980-81 will focus much more on the specifics of prevention education. Our future materials will assist local groups in working specifically on prevention.

6. **The Center focuses on education as a primary means of changing the destructive pattern of family violence.** A new awareness of an old problem can enable a new, more effective and appropriate response to that problem. This is particularly true for a problem like family violence which has been hushed up for so long.

In the educational process each workshop participant is a resource: each brings something to a workshop worth sharing. We value each person's testimony so that her or his life experiences are tapped and are integrated into the learning process.

7. **If learning signifies anything, it signifies change — whether in knowledge, attitudes and/or change in behavior.** People do learn and do change:

- Those who abuse others in their families usually do not like what they are doing, but see no alternatives. They can be motivated to change their abusive behavior.
- Those who are abused may tolerate the abuse for years because they, too, see no alternative. They learn that they need not tolerate the abuse any longer.
- Those who are called to respond to these problems as counselors, ministers, rabbis, police, doctors, teachers want to help but many times do not have the information and training they need to be able to respond. They are usually eager to be better prepared.

8. **Human sexuality is a very important dimension of every person's life.** Sexuality is intended to be shared in a context of respect, mutuality, caring and commitment between persons. Through its emotional dimension, sexual sharing can create deeper intimacy and trust between persons.

Because sexuality is a powerful and deeply significant dimension of human life, it also has great potential for being misused and thus for harming people. This is what occurs in incidents of incestuous assault or forced sexual activity in marriage. These expressions of family violence are the opposite of healthy, mature sexual activity. They are abusive, exploitative, and take advantage of the vulnerability of a child or spouse. These abuses diminish trust and break down intimacy in the family.

9. **Intervention from the outside into families where abuse occurs is often necessary in order to stop the abuse.** The family and the home have often been seen as private spheres, protected from outside intervention of any kind. They have been regarded as the areas of life over which the state had no control.

This custom of non-intervention into the family works well as long as the family is healthy, functional and no one is abused. However, when abuse occurs within the family, this custom serves to isolate and ignore the victims and to protect the abuser from any confrontation . . . and the abuse continues.

Many states recognize this problem and have passed legislation designed to protect children from abuse in families. Most of this legislation includes mandatory reporting requirements[2] and bespeaks the concern that someone (in this case, the state) take responsibility to protect children in cases where their usual protectors (parents) are abusive. Some states are also now dealing with the need to advocate for spouses who are abused in families so that family assault is treated as equivalent to other forms of criminal assault.

Some people express concern about granting the state power to intervene in family life. Certainly there have been instances of insensitive interventions by state agencies which need to be corrected.

We feel that the community (perhaps most effectively through the state) has a responsibility to preserve the health and safety of its members, inside or outside the family. Therefore, we support some means of effective and sensitive intervention on behalf of the children or adults who are being abused. The church and synagogue can also share this role effectively.

We share these principles in order to be clear about the values which inform our approach to education about family violence. We assume that anyone who works in the area of family violence also has basic value assumptions. The important thing is to be clear about what value assumptions you make and to be willing and able to articulate these to workshop participants when appropriate.

[2] Every state requires the reporting of non-accidental physical abuse of children to State Children's Protection agencies. Some states include emotional abuse, neglect and sexual molestation in the law. *Who* is required to report also varies by state but usually includes educators and professionals who have contact with children.

# Purpose, Goals and Objectives

## Purpose Statement

**FAMILY VIOLENCE: A Workshop Manual for Rural Communities** is designed to enable the religious and secular communities in rural areas to mobilize their resources into an effective network in response to family violence. Through cooperative efforts they can then provide comprehensive education, training, and outreach services which serves to reduce public acceptance of family violence — specifically spouse abuse, child abuse, incest and the abuse of elderly persons — and to meet the needs of victims, abusers, and their families.

*The Goals and Objectives included here are the specific, detailed goals and objectives for the workshop models and presentations in this manual. The goals and objectives are included in the Workshop Models in a more general form. Refer to these as needed for clarification and specificity.*

## Goals

To enable professionals and para-professionals in the religious and secular communities in rural areas:

1. To perceive family violence as a significant social problem.
2. To understand family violence from the perspective of the person being abused and that of the person who abuses so that their subsequent interventions will be in the interest of obtaining help for both.
3. To recognize indicators of family violence with a high degree of confidence.
4. To be aware of religious issues often raised by people who are abused and by people who abuse family members.
5. To help members of each discipline recognize the contributions they can make to reducing family violence within a multi-disciplinary approach.
6. To function effectively within their roles as contributors to a multidisciplinary approach to reduce family violence.
7. To develop a strategy for education about family violence in their local congregations and community in order to reduce the acceptance of family violence.

## Objectives

1. To present and discuss:
   A. Family violence as a major social problem confronting many families
   B. The issues and concerns of the abused and abusers confronted by family violence
   To be demonstrated by:
   (1) responses on pre- and post-tests
   (2) self-reports.
2. To present and discuss specific behaviors which are generally associated with persons experiencing intra-family violence:
   A. Indicators to identify abusers
   B. Indicators to identify the abused
   To be demonstrated by:
   (1) responses on pre- and post-tests
   (2) skills presented in role-playing
   (3) self-reports.
3. To present and discuss:
   A. Information concerning the counseling issues faced by victims and offenders of family violence and to develop appropriate counseling responses and/or interventions
   B. Information concerning the resources in the community and surrounding areas which can be utilized to deal with family violence
   To be demonstrated by:
   (1) responses on pre- and post-tests
   (2) skills demonstrated in role-playing
   (3) knowledge demonstrated in small group discussion and simulations.
4. To encourage participants:
   A. To analyze the root causes of family violence and understand the factors which contribute to its incidence
   B. To set goals and objectives for their community which will reduce the rate of acceptance of family violence and will increase awareness of resources available to them
   To be demonstrated by:
   (1) responses on pre- and post-tests
   (2) skills demonstrated in role-playing
   (3) knowledge demonstrated in small group discussions and simulations.

# Workshop Planning

## Purpose of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee's purpose is to:

- Set goals for the workshop. We suggest the Planning Committee use the goals listed in this workshop model to: (1) increase participants' awareness of the problems of family violence; (2) enable participants to respond more effectively to persons confronting family violence; (3) enable participants working in local teams which represent both the religious and secular communities to strategize around family violence issues.
- Recruit workshop leaders to implement this model.
- In consultation with workshop leaders, set any additional goals for the workshop specific to the community(s) who will be participating.
- Delineate tasks to be done pre-, during and post-workshop, and decide how and by whom they will be completed.

## Organizing the Planning Committee

One or two people may be the driving force in pushing for more education about family violence in your area. There are other interested people, but you have to find them. DO NOT GIVE UP! Klickitat County is a rural, agricultural county in southcentral Washington State. The history of the development of the Klickitat County Council on Domestic Violence offers an effective model for enlisting community cooperation.

**September 1978.** Goldendale (Klickitat County) unit of Church Women United forms a task force to research the problem of domestic violence and to assess local needs.

**October 1978.** The task force holds a public forum. The Co-Directors of the shelter in a neighboring county speak of their experiences and show the film, "Battered Women: Violence Behind Closed Doors." When the forum concludes, three persons volunteer to form a committee to promote services to victims of domestic violence in their area.

**November 1978.** "The Battered Women Committee," sponsored by Church Women United, meets at the Klickitat Valley Hospital. Representatives of the community services are invited to attend. The following agencies or groups respond to the invitation: Klickitat County Mental Health Services, Goldendale Police Department, Attorney from Legal Aid, Department of Social and Health Services, Klickitat County Sheriff's Office, various churches, Goldendale Ministerial Association, the Prosecuting Attorney of Klickitat County, a physician, and the Director of Nursing of the Klickitat Valley Hospital. The Co-Directors of the shelter in the neighboring county return and present some ideas on how to aid victims of domestic violence.

**November 1978.** Two additional organizational meetings are held. The two main problems addressed are funding needs to offer services, and training needs to prepare persons to counsel the victims of domestic violence.

**January 1979.** The Committee realizes the need to branch out from the sponsorship of Church Women United and become a non-profit organization. The task of writing the By-Laws begins.

**February 1979.** The Co-Directors of the neighboring county shelter conduct an all-day workshop to train advocates, "safe-home" personnel, and others involved in the program.

**April 1979.** The Committee becomes "The Klickitat County Council on Domestic Violence" with an Executive Committee and an active Council Board composed of lay persons, business and professional people who are willing to volunteer their time and expertise.

**August 1980.** The Council is organized into working committees with each board member chairing or participating on one of the committees. The Council is now able to offer in-service training about domestic violence and has done so for the Goldendale Ministerial Association and the Klickitat Valley Hospital. They offer the victims of domestic violence a safe home, counseling services, referral to agencies when necessary, and caring support. (See "Successful Rural Programs" Section of Appendix for address of the Klickitat County Council on Domestic Violence).

A working group or task force may already be operating in your locale. This group becomes a Planning Committee for the workshop. Are the community groups (e.g., religious, medical, legal) you are targeting for participation in the workshop represented on your Planning Committee? Input from these community groups is needed around designing the workshop to best fit their needs. Furthermore, they are a resource for recruiting other professionals and paraprofessionals from the groups they represent to attend the workshop.

## Recruiting Participants

The following process is adaptable to most community groups. Clergy are used in this example because many social service providers who plan workshops have little contact with clergy and do not know how to approach them.

**Specific Steps**[1]

1. Send out a letter and/or brochure to all the churches and synagogues in the area, announcing the workshop.

2. Request that an announcement be made about the workshop at ministerial association meetings.

3. Request that an announcement about the workshop be included in church and synagogue bulletins, inviting lay people to attend.

4. Request that the announcement about the workshop or the workshop brochure be posted on the bulletin board, if available.

5. Include information about the workshop in other newsletters which are sent to local congregations (e.g., the task force newsletter, an agency newsletter).

6. Make personal contacts and invite religious professionals and paraprofessionals to attend the workshop. Some ways to develop contacts include attending ministerial association meetings, attending fellowship times at churches and synagogues, meeting with individual minister or rabbis. These personal contacts give the Planning Committee a chance to explain the purpose of the workshop and to encourage ministers/rabbis and lay people to attend.

7. Request that the members of the Planning Committee who represent community groups (e.g., religious) discuss the workshop with their colleagues and encourage them to attend. Word of mouth represents a potent and crucial means of communication. Identify and gain the support of the leaders in a group you want to involve, and you extend your range considerably.

## Pre-Workshop Tasks[2]

| Task | How Far in Advance? | Who's Responsible? |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Set a date for the workshop. | 3 months | |
| ☐ Draw up a budget based on:<br>• Number of participants desired<br>• Workshop leaders' expenses and honoraria<br>• Materials (handouts, packets of materials, etc.)<br>• Publicity (brochures, posters, public service announcements, news releases)<br>• Postage<br>• Lunches served at the site<br>• Films and other rentals<br>• Refreshments | 3 months | |
| ☐ Invite speakers/workshop leaders. | 3 months | |
| ☐ Develop means to support the event. Unless you have a grant for the workshop, local support is usually possible from two sources: First, ask participants for a workshop fee. This is a common practice and may help participants to feel invested in the event. Frequently, enrollment and commitment levels are enhanced when tuition is charged for an event. However, this consideration must be weighed against the possibility that the fee may discourage other potential participants from attending the workshop. (Offer a sliding scale or scholarships for any who need them.) Second, ask for donations from local groups (congregations, service clubs, agencies) to cover costs. | 3 months (continuous) | |
| ☐ Secure a convenient facility that is adequately furnished with moveable chairs, tables, or desks and suitable for use of audio-visual materials. We strongly recommend using a religious facility (church or synagogue) as these facilities are usually convenient and spacious. Using this space also reflects religious community support for the workshop. | 3 months | |

[1] Adapted from Chautauqua County Rural Ministry, "Rural Advocates for Women," Chautauqua County, NY, July 1980.

[2] For a thorough checklist for planning meetings, see Eva Schindler-Rainman, *et., al., Taking Your Meetings Out of the Doldrums*. University Associates, 7596 Eads Avenue, La Jolla, CA 92037, 1977.

| Task | How Far in Advance? | Who's Responsible? |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Develop and print a brochure. List sponsoring agencies on the brochure. (See Appendix) | 10 weeks | |
| ☐ Publicize the workshop. Suggestions for publicity: congregational bulletins, congregational and agency newsletters, letters of invitation, brochure, word of mouth. | 6-8 weeks (continuous) | |
| ☐ Request that workshop participants pre-register. A form to be returned to the Planning Committee can be included in a brochure or letter of invitation. Pre-registration assists the Planning Committee in making decisions about how much space will be needed, how many lunches need to be ordered, whether child care is needed. Requesting payment of fees with registration strengthens participants' commitment to attending the workshop. | (continuous) | |
| ☐ Arrange for meal service at the site during the lunch break. This will encourage participants to remain at the site and will help the workshop leaders to begin the afternoon session on time with all present. | 6 weeks | |
| ☐ Order the needed audio-visual materials and reserve needed equipment. | 6-8 weeks | |
| ☐ Print a list of resources for participants. Compile any other materials to be distributed during the workshop. | 4 weeks | |
| ☐ Decide on ground rules (e.g., smoking during the workshop). | 2 weeks | |

### On-Site Preparation — Setting Up for the Workshop

- ☐ Try-out audio-visual materials and equipment to make sure everything works.
- ☐ Arrange chairs in semi-circular arrangement. Avoid straight rows of chairs.
- ☐ Set up refreshments (coffee, tea, juice, other).
- ☐ Have name tags and markers available.
- ☐ Organize materials for distributing as handouts.
- ☐ Set up display of books and other materials and indicate where they may be obtained.

### During the Workshop

- ☐ Provide greeters to welcome the participants as they arrive, asking each to sign in, pick up materials and help themselves to refreshments. (See Model Workshop, DAY 1)
- ☐ Make sure there is someone present who can operate the audio-visual equipment.
- ☐ Designate one or two people to be responsible for announcements, acting as liaison with the managers of the facility, other.
- ☐ Designate members of the Planning Team by a different colored name tag and see that they are available throughout the day for questions from participants.

| Task | Who's Responsible? |
|---|---|

## Facility Check-List for Workshop Organizers

**How is the Facility?**

- ☐ calm and quiet
- ☐ moderate temperature
- ☐ easily accessible/convenient location
- ☐ spacious enough for size of group
- ☐ adequately furnished with chairs, tables, desks
- ☐ informal and relaxed
- ☐ too noisy
- ☐ too warm or cold
- ☐ too difficult to reach
- ☐ too cramped/too large
- ☐ without adequate chairs, tables, desks
- ☐ too formal/too casual

## Post-Workshop Tasks

- ☐ Pat yourselves on the back.
- ☐ Thank everyone who participated, especially those who helped.
- ☐ Return equipment.
- ☐ Read and analyze the evaluations.
- ☐ Mail follow-up materials (e.g., list of participants).
- ☐ Remind people of follow-up: next meeting, next workshop.
- ☐ Pay bills.

# Tips for Workshop Leaders

## Techniques for Involving Participants

The following learning techniques or methods are used in this model of a family violence workshop to ensure that the workshop is stimulating and involves all participants in the learning process.

**Role-Playing.** A participatory learning technique requiring members of the group to play-act themselves or another designated person. Alternatively, two persons may exchange roles and play each other.

To enact role-plays: (1) divide the entire group into small groups of 2-4 persons and assign a role-play to each small group along with an observer, or (2) select a group of participants to act out the roles while the rest observes.

Clearly state the purpose of the role-play exercise. This technique provides a means of experiencing another person's point of view and approach to a situation; it also serves to develop skills in a practice situation. An example of a role-playing exercise:

*Step 1. Tell the group, "This role-playing exercise is to give you a chance to interview victims and offenders of family violence. As the one offering help, retain your own role and respond to the persons seeking help as if they were actually approaching you in your work setting."*

*Step 2: Each player selects a role from printed instructions or role-profiles. Role profiles describe the situation, provide descriptive information about the person in the role, and stipulate the feelings associated with the role. An example of a typical role description might be:*

> Mother of incest victim: The mother expresses disbelief that such a thing could happen. She asked her husband about it and he denied that anything happened. She asks the counselor to talk to the child and reprimand the child for lying.

*Step 3: Instruct the players to stay in their roles, not to shift back and forth between their assigned roles and their "real-life" opinions and feelings.*

*Step 4: Give role-players time to "feel" their assigned roles, to "become" those persons.*

*Step 5: Give specific instructions concerning the kinds of observations that should be made by those analyzing the role-plays. For example, observations can be structured around questions that onlookers keep in mind as they watch, such as: (a) what are the strengths and weaknesses of the counselor's approach? (b) evaluate the counselor's ability to assess the occurrence of violence or abuse.*

Role-plays usually continue for 5-10 minutes and rarely last longer than 15 minutes. Inform the players when they have 2-3 minutes before closure.

Discussion following the role-play experience is an important part of the process. Give the participants who played the roles time to comment on how they felt about their own roles and about the other players' responses to them. Discussion can then proceed to the comments of those who observed the role-plays.

**Large Group Discussion.** The entire group discusses opinions, questions, or issues related to a particular topic. The session may be structured with preplanned questions or may be left unstructured.

How the workshop leader **asks** questions is an integral key to effective large group discussions. Avoid asking "yes" or "no" questions which give minimal information; instead, use questions that being with **how, why,** and **which.** Encourage all participants to contribute their ideas.

How the workshop leader **responds** to a participant's questions and comments is critical to maintaining a comfortable learning environment. Show your respect for the inquirer by thanking her or him for her/his input. Affirm the testimony that has been presented, thereby encouraging participants to continue to risk sharing valuable information which they might otherwise write-off as "dumb", too unique, unimportant, or redundant.

**Presentation/Lecture.** An efficient teaching method using the systematic presentation of ideas to bring new knowledge to a group or to provide background material for group discussion.

Things to remember about this method:

1. The amount of information that participants retain is proportionate to the degree to which they get involved.
2. Few presenters hold the interest of a group for long.
3. Using visual materials enlivens a presentation.

In this manual the word **lecture** is avoided, and **presentation** or **talk** is used to underscore the informal, conversational style which is most effective for learning.

**Small Group Discussion.** Four to six people meet together in a comfortable environment to generate questions, share concerns and problems, suggest solutions to a stated problem, or to evaluate ideas that have

been presented in a presentation, film, or via some other process.

Small groups allow more opportunity for active involvement than large groups. When using this learning technique in a workshop, allow each member to feel free to participate at his or her own pace.

Small group discussions develop teamwork and allow participants to help each other through the flow of ideas.

**Brainstorming.** This is an effective learning method for stimulating active participation and generating ideas. Encourage people to speak out and to express all ideas, both wild and practical ones, without criticizing or analyzing them. A 5-15 minute time-frame creates a sense of urgency. Record ideas on the blackboard or newsprint and use the resulting ideas in some way. For example: Give the task of prioritizing a list of ideas generated by a brainstorming session to either the large or small groups.

**Materials.** Use films, handouts, or resource papers which parallel and augment leader presentations to reinforce specific material.

**Questions.** When questions come from the group turn them back to the group for solutions. This may trigger additional discussion and will increase the involvement of the participants in their own learning process.

## Storytelling: How to Utilize Experience-Based Learning

Any effective educational and training approach includes a variety of learning techniques. This is particularly true in a workshop through which participants expect to increase their skills for effective action.

Likewise, an effective approach seeks to utilize and incorporate participants' experiences, acknowledging these as the most significant bases for their learning. The workshop should enable participants to see their experiences more clearly, to evaluate them, and then to choose actions based on what they have learned from the workshop.

People often share their experiences in the form of storytelling. People who are experiencing family violence or who have experienced the problem in the past may share their experiences with the group. Acknowledge their experiences and thank them for sharing. Speak to each such person individually at the break and offer a referral to a local community agency/resource if the violence is current or if the person sharing the experience expresses a need for further assistance. Explain that the workshop is an educational event and cannot deal with individual problems.

Sometimes storytelling can be a source of great frustration for the leader because people seem to go off on tangents unrelated to the immediate process. For example, a clergy person may tell a story about her/his first encounter with a member of the congregation who was being battered at home. The pastor may then describe her/his response, which, in light of the current discussion may seem inadequate: "I told the battered woman to bring her spouse in for marriage counseling with me."

The important thing about the story is not whether the action at the time was right or wrong, but what did the clergy person learn from the experience? What would she/he do differently now?

A crisis-line volunteer may tell a story about having been sexually abused as a child by her uncle. This story serves one of two functions for her. If the person has not had an opportunity to work through her feelings about the experience, this may be a request for help. In this case, the leader should acknowledge the person's experience and offer to discuss it further outside the group setting. (Note: There will always be victims and probably abusers in any group being trained. It is often helpful to the group to acknowledge your awareness of this fact early in the process so that the group doesn't see itself as "untouched" by the problem.) If the persons sharing seem to have some distance on their feelings about the experiences, they are probably sharing so as to confirm (or, in some cases, dispute) the information the leaders are providing. In this case these stories can provide valuable personal contacts or "witnesses" to the problem and can be utilized by the leader.

## Defensiveness, Resistance and Conflict: How to Respond

Be prepared for all three. Expect some initial resistance or defensiveness in every group. The resistance will be there not because the participants are uncaring, insensitive, evil people but because they don't really want to believe that family violence is as serious and widespread as they are told it is. The facts are very disturbing. Emotionally and intellectually they will resist some of the leaders' initial assertions: "I can't believe that we have that much of this kind of thing in our community (or our congregation)" . . . "Where do those figures come from?" . . . "I've never seen this among **my** friends." . . .

The group may also resist the **leaders' authority and expertise.** This may be apparent in questions or comments that sound challenging.

- Respond to people's questions or comments calmly and in a matter-of-fact way.

- Cite sources, offer to send them articles, or refer them to materials in their workshop packets.
- Be personal: "I used to believe that too. It's very common because we so seldom talk about family violence in our society. None of us likes to admit that this is happening to so many people."
- Identify with their discomfort to help break down a possible "we-they" split: "we" being the aware, sensitive advocates for change and "they" being the unaware, insensitive, naive roadblocks to change.
- Move slowly and be patient. Don't expect people to be where you want them to be at the beginning of the workshop. **Do** expect them to be able to move and change as a result of this workshop experience.

Some resistance may come from a **denial of the leaders' credibility.** Unless the participants know the leaders prior to the workshop, there is no reason that the leaders should be seen as credible initially. Credibility cannot be assumed; it must be built with the group.

- In the introductions, as leaders, share your background and credentials relevant to family violence: academic training, work experience, personal comments about how you began to work in this area.
- Use statistics (sparingly) and research to support your assertions.
- Use experience as an authority: "In the parish, I find that . . .", "When I used to work in a shelter . . .", "Most of the men who batter with whom I have worked say that . . ."

Defensiveness on the part of some participants may be caused by their anxieties and expectations about who the leaders are and what they represent. While these expectations may be totally unrealistic, they nonetheless will affect some participants' responses.

For example, if someone comes to a workshop on family violence expecting to find a "raving feminist" who will harangue the group, that individual's reaction to the leader — regardless of what the leader says or does — will be based on that anxious expectation. It will be difficult and at times impossible to get past this image with some people, especially if the leader's analysis is, in fact, feminist.

Similarly, if a participant expects the leader, who is identified with the religious community, to be judgmental, narrow-minded, and unaware, his/her reactions will be based on an inaccurate expectation and the participant may come across to the group and leaders as unreasonable, unnecessarily aggressive and challenging.

- Attempt to break through this defensiveness by contradicting the stereotype that the person may have. Try to prevent them from being able to put you in a neat box. For example:

  *Participant: "I think you came here just to lay a trip on us with all your women's lib junk."*

  *Leader: "No, I am here because I am very concerned about what is happening to the family in our society. I want to help prevent families from being destroyed by family violence."*
- Be patient and matter-of-fact.
- Be clear about your assumptions and values and give people enough information about you and your work so that they can begin to know you beyond the stereotypes.

There may be **areas of genuine conflict** of opinion or values between the leaders and some participants.

- Acknowledge these areas and look for some point of common value to build on. For example:

  *Participant: "Don't you think that passage of the E.R.A. will increase family violence?*

  *Leader: "No, I don't. In fact, I think it will help the problem by giving women greater legal protection at home and at work. We may not agree on whether the E.R.A. should be passed, but I hope we can agree that violent families are hurting and need our help."*

On rare occasions, there may be a group participant whose primary agenda is not to share in a learning process but rather, to disrupt it. This will be apparent in the participant's behavior: baiting the leaders ("You want to destroy the family, don't you?"); speech-making in the group; not really hearing the leaders' or other participants' comments; use of a lot of rhetoric; seemingly inappropriate anger and hostility; dominating the group; other behaviors.

- Let the group handle it. In most cases, other participants are there to learn and are very resentful when a single person is discourteous and disruptive. They will often confront the person in the group which is usually an effective means of limiting the disruption.
- If the group is intimidated by the disruption and does not take care of it, then the leader must take control of the situation, finally and courteously. For example:

  *Leader: "I think it is important that other group members be able to speak as well, so I would appreciate it if you would hold your comments, Mr. Johnson," or "You seem to have some very strong feelings about this*

*subject, Mrs. Smith. Would you be willing to discuss this further with me at the break so that we can move on now?"*

- It may be, in an extreme situation, that nothing will deter the disruptive behavior. Then ask the person to leave the group in order that the rest of the group can complete its work.
- Always show courtesy and respect to any group member. The rest of the group will appreciate and respect your skill and authority if you treat each one of them with respect as well.

# II. Educational Formats

*This section contains:*

Use of the Workshop Formats

A Model 3-Day Workshop: Reponse to Family Violence in Rural Areas
- Day 1 — Focus on Spouse Abuse
- Day 2 — Focus on Child Abuse
- Day 3 — Religious Issues and Local Strategies

A Model 1-Day Workshop: Response to Family Violence in Rural Areas

Presentations for General Public Education

# Use of Workshop Formats

The Workshop models included in this manual are designed to provide flexibility in presentations of family violence workshops. These formats are based on pilot workshops presented by the Center this past year with rural groups from New England, mid Atlantic, Southeast and Northwest states. The two basic models are as follows:

**3-Day Model Workshop** *(see pages 26-43)*

This Workshop is the most comprehensive and requires the greatest time commitment from participants and Workshop leaders. It is also **the most effective means** of accomplishing the Workshop goals. The concentrated 3-day period allows an in-depth presentation and discussion of family violence in rural areas. it also encourages the cohesiveness of a group of informed, concerned, active citizens.

If it is not possible to present the Workshop in a 3-day block, each day can be presented separately in a series, for example, three Thursdays in a row.

Each day of the 3-day Model builds on the preceeding days. Therefore, if using the 3-day Model format, we strongly recommend that all three days be presented either on consecutive days or in a series.

**1-Day Model Workshop** *(see pages 44-48)*

This Workshop is a shorter, compact version which provides an **introduction** to family violence in rural areas, focusing primarily on spouse battering. This Workshop does address religious issues and provides participants an opportunity to set goals and strategize in their local areas.

**If only one day is possible for a workshop,** use this format. The response from most groups is a clear awareness of their need for further training on family violence. The 1-day Model often serves as a necessary catalyst for community interest and can easily be followed by other workshop events.

In addition to the two basic Workshop Models, we include information on General Public Presentations (pp. 49-50). This material will help local planning committees or task groups prepare presentations for local service clubs, religious groups, parents' groups, etc. and can be used before or after Workshop presentations.

**Note to Manual Users**

*A Model 3-Day Workshop: Response to Family Violence in Rural Areas is designed to be a useful tool in the actual presentation of a workshop.*

*In the section "Content and Process," specific directions are given to those presenting the workshop. The specific persons responsible for each section are indicated in bold type, e.g. workshop planners or workshop leaders.*

*The sections in italics provide additional information to the workshop leaders, such as tips, reminders, explanations for doing an exercise a specific way.*

*All case examples in the manual represent actual clinical situations. The material is accurate, but names and identifying data have been changed to protect the confidentiality of clients, parishioners, and congregants.*

# A Model 3-Day Workshop: Response to Family Violence in Rural Areas

## Day 1 — Focus on Spouse Abuse

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 30 minutes | **Registration** | |
| | Begin the workshop with a registration period preceding the opening formal session to provide time for participants to sign in, make name tags, and socialize. | sign-in sheets (name, address, agency or congregation) name tags, markers, packets, refreshments |
| | One of the **workshop planners** welcomes participants as they arrive, asking them to sign in, pick up a packet of materials, and help themselves to refreshments. | |
| 30 minutes | **Introductions, Review of Goals and Agenda** | |
| | One of the **workshop planners** begins the session by welcoming participants and thanking them for their willingness to participate in the 3-day event. Acknowledge local sponsorship by naming the co-sponsors and/or the Planning Committee members. | |
| | *Clarification of local sponsorship gives credibility to the event and allays fears of "outsiders" coming in to present a workshop.* | |
| | Introduce the **workshop leaders,** giving background information on the leaders' expertise and experience in working on the problem of family violence. | |
| | *If workshop leaders are members of the community, they will already be known to many participants. If they are outside resources, they will not be known so thank them for coming.* | |
| | **Workshop leaders** invite participants to introduce themselves, indicating name, the agency or group they represent, and why they came to the workshop. | |
| | *Self-introductions by participants provide a sense of the various interests and groups represented in the workshop. E.g., 8 ministers, 4 lay people, and 14 social service providers indicate that the group is well mixed with potential for good dialogue. Note the various reasons expressed for attending and connect these throughout the workshop. For example, one participant says that she is there to learn about religious questions because of a recent experience she had working in the shelter. In the Day 3 session on religious issues, refer to her story as an example.* | |
| | **One workshop leader** introduces the workshop goals which were decided by the Planning Committee. | goals printed on newsprint and posted on wall |
| | **Suggested Goals for the Workshop**<br>General goals:<br>• To increase participants' awareness of the nature and extent of family violence<br>• To enable participants to respond more effectively to those persons confronting family violence<br>• To develop cooperation between the religious and secular communities in dealing with family violence<br>• To enable participants to strategize around family violence issues, working in local teams representing both the religious and secular communities | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | Goals specific to a particular community or region:<br>• To list resources currently available to respond to family violence<br>• To evaluate the effectiveness of these resources<br><br>Explain the process by which the Planning Committee arrived at these goals (see "Workshop Planning").<br>Check the group's reaction to the goals:<br><br>• "Are your expectations for this workshop covered in these goals?"<br>• "Are there any major goals which we have overlooked?"<br><br>If there are suggested additions, ask for the group's reaction. If there is general consensus between the group and the workshop leaders, then add the goal.<br><br>*Workshop leaders should be clear about their ability or willingness to meet new goals. Acceptance of the goals by the group makes it easier for the leader to keep the group focused. Refer to the posted goals, as needed, throughout the workshop.* | |
| | A **workshop leader** reviews the agenda for the 3 days of the workshop. Clarify each item and respond to questions. Remind participants that the agenda is flexible but that you will try to stay on time as much as possible.<br><br>*Reviewing the entire agenda at the beginning of this first session provides an overview of each day's activities so that participants can understand the pattern and content of the workshop as a whole. This helps allay concern about what will and will not be covered, and when.*<br><br>A **workshop leader** provides necessary information about availability of restrooms, meal arrangements, and accommodations for out-of-town participants. Respond to questions and/or needs expressed. | agenda on newsprint; each day posted on separate sheet |
| 20 minutes | **Pre-Test Questionnaire**<br><br>While one **workshop leader** passes out the questionnaire, the other explains to the group that the questionnaire is a pre-test tool designed to elicit information regarding:<br>• Attitudes about family violence<br>• General awareness regarding types of interventions<br>• General knowledge about family violence<br><br>Secular social service providers are asked to insert "agency" for "congregation" where appropriate.<br>Explain to the group that the questionnaire will be given again at the end of the workshop in order to measure any changes. Ask them to write their birthdates on the front in order to correlate with the second questionnaire. Assure them that their responses are confidential. | questionnaires (see Appendix) |
| 10 minutes | **Informal Break**<br><br>As participants complete questionnaires and **workshop leaders** collect them, invite participants to get refreshments if they wish. | refreshments |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 20 minutes | **Definition of Family Violence**<br><br>A **workshop leader** presents a descriptive definition of family violence. Include the following areas, listing on newsprint:<br>• Physical abuse<br>• Psychological abuse<br>• Sexual abuse<br>• Destruction of property or pets<br>(See Sample Presentation, "The Person Who Batters").<br><br>Explain that the definition will be referred to and expanded during the workshop. Respond to questions for clarification.<br><br>*A descriptive definition of family violence is recommended here rather than a theoretical definition or one which attempts to define the problem in terms of cause.*<br><br>*A descriptive definition simply describes what is actually happening in violent families, information which is generally indisputable.*<br><br>*At this initial stage it does not post any theoretical position with which to argue.* | newsprint |
| 30 minutes | **Early Learning About Spouse Abuse**<br>(small group exercise)<br><br>A **workshop leader** explains that this small group exercise is designed to identify the participants' earliest awareness of spouse abuse, specifically:<br>• Where it was learned (cartoons, neighbors, jokes, etc.)<br>• What the message was (trivial, frightening, humorous, etc.)<br><br>Ask participants to number off into small groups of 3-5 each. As they gather in their groups, give these questions:<br>• "How and when did you first learn about spouse abuse?" Be specific.<br>• "What contact have you had with spouse abuse in the last several years?"<br><br>Give the groups 20 minutes to discuss these items. Then return to the large group and share any general awareness, using these questions:<br>• "Were there any common awarenesses in your group?"<br>• "Were there any unique awarenesses?"<br><br>*In introducing this exercise to the group, indicate that you do not expect them to share personal experiences of spouse abuse. The purpose of the exercise is to share individual awareness of the problem, not personal experiences of the problem. This exercise gives the group a sense that we all share common cultural myths and beliefs about spouse abuse, some of which are accurate and some are not. The group starts from this common awareness.* | |
| 10 minutes | **Break**<br><br>Invite participants to take a break and then return to the large group. | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 30 minutes | **Film:** "Battered Women: Violence Behind Closed Doors" | |
| | A **workshop leader** introduces the film to the whole group: "This film was produced by the J. Gary Mitchell Film Company and shows victims and abusers as well as several programs developed to meet their needs." (See Annotated Bibliography for film availability). | 16mm projector, film, extension cord, screen |
| 30 minutes | **Debriefing the Film** | |
| | Ask the whole group for any general comments or reactions to the film. In responding to comments, clarify information and use statistics to provide basic information about spouse abuse. | newsprint, markers |
| | *When using the Mitchell film, "Violence Behind Closed Doors", specifically clarify the portrayal of the black male batterer. He comes across as much more rigid and insensitive with no regret for his battering or sense that he has done anything wrong. He is contrasted with the white male batterer who shows some regret and desire to change.* | |
| | *This contrast perpetuates a negative stereotype about black men.* | |
| | Ask the group specifically: "What does the film say about victims of abuse?" | |
| | List these responses on newsprint under the title "Profiles of Victims". Clarify or expand as needed. | |
| | Ask specifically: "What does the film say about those who abuse?" | |
| | List these responses on newsprint under the title "Profile of Abusers" Clarify or expand as needed. (See Sample Presentations, "Victims of Spouse Abuse" and "The Person Who Batters"). | |
| | Clarify any myths which may arise at this point. | |
| | *These lists should provide fairly complete profiles of persons involved in spouse abuse. The profiles can be used for general reference throughout the session.* | |
| 60 minutes | **Lunch** | |
| | If possible, the **Planning Committee** serves a simple soup-and-sandwich lunch at the meeting. | food and beverage |
| | *Serving the meal at the workshop site eliminates the need for participants to leave the meeting place and find lunch on their own. It decreases the chances of losing people and encourages community-building among participants during informal conversation.* | |
| | Allow an hour for the meal. | |
| | *Even if serving, eating, and clean-up don't take the entire hour, people need that much of a break after a heavy morning.* | |
| 40 minutes | **Implications for Those Who Abuse** | |
| | Building on the morning discussion, the **workshop leader** presents the following new material:<br>• The roots and dynamics of spouse abuse as a learned response to stress<br>• Specific characteristics of the abuser<br>• Counseling concerns for the abuser | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | Encourage participants to share experiences and ask questions. (See Sample Presentation, "The Person Who Batters") | |
| | *Emphasize that "battering" is learned behavior. Indicate empathy for the abuser but not for the abusive behavior. Presenting information on the abuser first and then on the victim helps to address participants' concerns for the abuser and what is usually an initial defense of him.* | |
| | *When the presentation begins with the victim (which may seem like the priority to the presenter), participants will usually spend most of the time asking questions about the abuser. Present abusers as persons who have serious problems, who do not like what they do, and whose violence will not be tolerated.* | |
| 40 minutes | **Implications for Victims** | |
| | Again, building on the morning discussion, the **workshop leader** presents material on:<br>• The battering cycle<br>• Specific characteristics of victims<br>• Counseling concerns for victims | |
| | Encourage participants to share experiences and ask questions. (See Sample Presentation, "Victims of Spouse Abuse"). | |
| | *Emphasize the fact that battering is not caused by the relationship between the batterer and the victim. Regardless of the victim's behavior, battering is never deserved and is an unacceptable response to stress and conflict.* | |
| 10 minutes | **Break** | |
| | Invite participants to take a break for refreshments. | refreshments |
| 40 minutes | **Counseling a Battered Woman** (model role play) | |
| | A **workshop leader** introduces this exercise by explaining that the two leaders will do a model role play of a battered woman and her minister. Ask participants to observe the interaction. Tell them that they will then be divided into small groups to develop solutions to the problem. | |
| | *This exercise enables participants to experience the crisis situation presented by a battered woman. The scenario incorporates many of the elements discussed thus far. Observing the role-play helps participants to understand how abstract issues are expressed in concrete situations.* | |
| | One of the workshop leaders plays a battered woman, the other plays a minister or rabbi. | |
| | **Scenario:**<br>A battered woman approaches her minister late one afternoon and expresses anxiety about being with her spouse for the weekend. (Since his bowling league no longer occupies him on weekends, he will be at home.) He has been laid off and is feeling down; she cannot seem to keep the baby quiet around him. Last weekend he hit her (the wife) very hard. When she woke up, he said he was really sorry that he had hit her. She | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | has her small child with her in the office. She doesn't know what to do, but wishes she could make her husband's life easier so he wouldn't get so upset.<br>The minister responds with concern for her, her child and her spouse and tries to help the woman understand the situation could be life-threatening for her.<br>Stop the role play after a maximum of 15 minutes. Each role player debriefs stating what she/he found helpful/frustrating/confusing: For example:<br>Wife: "It was very helpful that you listened carefully and asked me questions which helped me clarify what had happened."<br>Minister: "It was frustrating for me when you were so resistant to looking specifically at what your husband had done and could do again."<br>After role players have debriefed, ask participants to make any observations or suggestions.<br>Then ask participants to count off into goups of 5-6 for the following task:<br>Based on their knowledge of resources in their areas, ask participants to discuss what options are available to this woman at this point and through the weekend: (a) if she chooses to go back home and (b) if she chooses to leave home temporarily.<br>As the group discusses what they would recommend to this woman, **a member of each group** lists the options on newsprint.<br>*This exercise allows participants to draw upon the resources of their small group in order to develop a response to this particular crisis situation. Creative results usually result.* | newsprint, markers for each small group |
| 20 minutes | **Debriefing**<br>A **workshop leader** calls the small groups back into the large group. Ask each group to report back its plan for the woman, posting its list as it is reported.<br>Discuss and critique the different approaches. **Workshop leaders** point out any major gaps in available resources and note them for discussion during Day 2 of the workshop. | masking tape |
| 10 minutes | **Evaluation and Adjournment**<br>Distribute evaluation forms to all participants asking for their feedback on the day.<br>Ask participants to take as long as they need and to leave forms with you as they leave. | evaluation sheets (see Appendix) |

## Day 2 — Focus on Child Abuse

**Note:** *Instructions are addressed to workshop leader(s) unless specified otherwise.*

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 15 minutes | **Overview of Child Abuse**<br><br>Review the family violence definition from DAY 1, emphasizing its relevance to children as victims of family violence.<br>Briefly present an overview of child abuse, including references to physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. Point out that most of the day's discussion will relate to child sexual abuse within the family. (See Sample Presentation, "Family Violence Directed Against Children").<br><br>*Beginning with the family violence definition helps to maintain continuity with DAY 1 and provides a context for the day's focus on children.* | |
| 35 minutes | **Early Learnings about Child Sexual Abuse**<br><br>(small group exercise)<br>Explain that this small group exercise is designed to identify the participants' earliest awareness of child sexual abuse:<br>• In what setting did the learning occur (stories from other children, cautions from parents, other)<br>• What was the message given (fear, little information, other)<br><br>Ask participants to number off into small groups of 3-5 people each. After they gather into their groups, give them these questions:<br>• How and when did you first learn about child sexual abuse? Be specific, if possible.<br>• What contact have you had with child sexual abuse in the last several years?<br><br>*Indicate to the groups that you do not expect them to share personal experiences of child sexual abuse. The purpose of the exercise is to share individual learnings about the problem, not personal experiences of the problem.*<br>*This gives the group a sense that we all share common cultural myths and beliefs about child sexual abuse, many of which are inaccurate. The group starts from this common awareness.*<br><br>Give groups 20 minutes to discuss. Then ask participants to return to the large group and share any general awarenesses.<br>• Were there any common experiences in your small groups?<br>• Were there any unique experiences? | |
| 25 minutes | **Film: "Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes"**<br><br>Introduce the film to the whole group: "This film was produced by the J. Gary Mitchell Film Company. The three women who speak in the film are all victims of incest. They got together to discuss making a film about incest and Mitchell turned on the cameras. The film is an unrehearsed discussion by these three women." (See Annotated Bibliography for availability of the film.) | 16mm projector, film, screen, extension cords |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 15 minutes | **Debriefing the Film**<br>*The film provides a personal view of the problem of incest and also portrays the range of reactions which victims have. Since the victims who speak are now adults, the audience hears both about their childhood experiences and about their concerns as adults. This is useful because workshop participants will encounter both children and adults who were victims as children*<br>Ask the whole group for:<br>• Any general comments or reactions to the film?<br>• What one aspect of the film impressed you most?<br>In responding to comments, clarify information and statistics to provide basic information about incest. (See Sample Presentation, "Family Violence Directed Against Children") | |
| 15 minutes | **Break**<br>Invite participants to take a break for refreshments. | Refreshments |
| 45 minutes | **Counseling Issues: Incest Offenders**<br>Building on the morning discussion, present information on the incest offender. (See Sample Presentation, "The Incest Offender"). Include:<br>• Characteristics of offenders<br>• Behavior dynamics of offenders<br>• Implications for counseling<br>Encourage participants to ask questions and comment.<br>*Again, beginning with discussion about offenders minimizes the potential for resistance from participants because the workshop is thought to be "too victim-oriented". Convey empathy for the offenders but not for their behavior. While the welfare of the victims may be your highest priority, in the final analysis, everyone's welfare is dependent on effective intervention and treatment with offenders.* | |
| 30 minutes | **Counseling Issues: Non-Offending Parent(s)**<br>Building upon the morning discussion, present information on the parent or parents who are not sexually abusing the children. (See Sample Presentation, "Non-offending Parents of Children Who Are Victims of Incest")<br>• Needs of non-offending parent(s)<br>• Importance of their role in support of the children who are abused<br>• Non-offending parents' possible ambivalence towards the children who are victims<br>Encourage participants to comment and ask questions. | |
| 1 hour | **Lunch**<br>If possible, the **Planning Committee** serves a simple lunch at the meeting site. Allow an hour for the meal. | Food and drink |
| 45 minutes | **Counseling Issues: Victims of Incest**<br>Building upon the morning discussion, present information on the victim of intra-family child sexual abuse. (See | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | Sample Presentation, "Family Violence Directed Against Children") Include:<br>• Characteristics of child victims<br>• Indicators of sexual abuse of children<br>• Implications for counseling<br>• Legal obligations to report child sexual abuse<br>• Issues for adults who were victims of incest as children<br>Encourage participants to comment and ask questions. | |
| 45 minutes | **Counseling Situations** (role-plays)<br>Introduce this exercise, explaining that its purpose is to provide a situation in which participants can put into practice some of the new information they have learned thus far in the workshop. Encourage them to utilize the awareness they have gained from the first day and a half of the workshop.<br>Divide the group into small groups of 3 (triads). Make sure that each triad is a mix of people, e.g., a clergy, social worker, and lay person.<br>Explain the role-play process (for those who are not familiar with it): In the triad, one person plays the person with the problem or concern, one person plays the helper/counselor, and the third person observes without entering into the role-play directly. A role-play is intended to be a realistic portrayal of a situation, so encourage players to remain in character while playing their roles.<br>The person who chooses to play the helper/counselor should basically retain her/his identity, that is, a social worker in a community mental health office or a minister would play her/himself.<br>Ask one person in each triad to play the person presenting a problem or concern. Give that person a role description typed on a slip of paper. Allow her/him a few moments to reflect upon the role and to "become" that person.<br>The person presenting the problem or concern presents the situation in the course of the role-play, not before.<br>When everyone is ready to begin, ask the triads to role-play for about 15 minutes, indicating that you will call time.<br>After 15 minutes, call time and ask the triads to debrief in their small groups. The two role players respond by indicating how they felt in their roles, what was helpful, what wasn't. The observer makes any additional comments about dynamics of the interaction.<br>For example, a woman portraying a mother of an incest victim may state that she was glad that the counselor reinforced her feeling that as mother, she needs to believe and be supportive of her child. The observor may point out that the counselor conveyed the message of care for the mother by the counselor's tone of voice and offer of Kleenex when the mother started crying.<br>Allow five minutes for the debriefing process.<br>Then ask triad members (staying in the same triads) to change roles. Someone else will present the problem, someone else counsels, and someone else observes. Give a new role to the person who is to present a problem. Ask the triads to role play for another 15 minutes.<br>Call time and ask triads to debrief again for 5 minutes. | Roles typed on slips of paper |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *Watch the time on this exercise, making sure that each triad does both role-plays. This makes it possible for each person to play at least one active role.*<br>*When you give out roles on slips of paper, try to match person with role somewhat. Try to give women what would ordinarily be women's roles: battered spouse with 3 children, mother who beats her children. Give men what would be male roles: incest offenders, adult who was sexually abused as a child, batterer.*<br>*Allow some flexibility in case you have participants who, when asked, state they are uncomfortable playing certain roles. For example, a woman may not want to play a battered woman because she once was a battered woman. Let these participants choose another role.* | |
| 15 minutes | **Debriefing**<br>Call the small groups back together into the large group. Ask for comments, reactions or questions to the role-playing experience. Discuss in large group. | |
| 15 minutes | **Break**<br>Invite participants to take a break for refreshments. | Refreshments |
| 50 minutes | **Focus on Rural and Small Community Issues**<br>Introduce this exercise by explaining that its purpose is to examine the issues and concerns which arise specifically in rural and semi-rural areas in addressing family violence. Having identified specific concerns, the group will then problem-solve together.<br>This exercise helps participants identify:<br>• Problems which are peculiar to rural areas<br>• Resources which are peculiar to rural areas<br>The group is encouraged to think creatively about ways to address these concerns. (See "A Commentary on Rural Issues in Family Violence")<br>Ask the large group to brainstorm **specific problems** in providing direct services to families experiencing violence, problems which result **primarily** from being in a rural setting, e.g., no public transportation and long distances to travel.<br>**One workshop leader** lists these on newsprint. **The other leader** follows along using the "Commentary on Rural Issues in Family Violence" found in this manual, checking off those items listed by the group.<br>Now ask the group to brainstorm what **advantages** or **resources** they feel are available due to their location in a rural setting, e.g., service delivery people know each other and can reach each other easily for assistance.<br>**The leader** who has been observing the discussion adds any major areas overlooked by the group as listed in the Rural Issues and Family Violence paper.<br>*Using two lists, one pointing out limitations or problems and one pointing out advantages of the rural setting, helps to give the group a sense of balance about the situation and keeps its members from feeling overwhelmed by the negative aspects.* | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *There are special circumstances, whether the setting is rural, suburban or urban, which need to be taken into consideration when developing more effective responses to family violence.*<br>*Looking at the specifics does not imply that working in rural and semi-rural areas is more or less difficult than working in suburban or urban areas. However, service providers working in rural areas face specific constraints and have specific resources which need to be identified and addressed.* | |
| | From the list of problems or limitations elicited in the brainstorming session, ask the group to choose what they see to be the **three most serious problems.**<br>Divide the large group into 3 small groups. Assign one problem to each group. Ask the groups to develop creative solutions **irrespective of currently available resources in their areas** and to write their solutions on newsprint.<br>**For example,** the problem of transportation: the difficulty of transporting abused women and children to a safe home in the county. The solution could be to develop a volunteer network of persons available to provide transportation as needed. | Newsprint, markers |
| | *This part of the exercise encourages creative problem-solving which is not limited by lack of money, time, or staff.*<br>*Relieved of these considerations momentarily, participants sometimes can envision ingenious solutions to specific problems.*<br>*This exercise is energizing when it reveals to people that together they have the creative energy to overcome what previously or otherwise seemed to be major roadblocks to improved service delivery.*<br>*The exercise also encourages pooling creative energies from all the participants.* | |
| | Call time after 20 minutes and call the group back together. Ask each small group to post its list and report its solution.<br>Close the session by summarizing and commending the group as a whole for its efforts. | |
| 10 minutes | **Evaluation and Adjournment** | |
| | Distribute evaluation forms to all participants, asking for their feedback on the day. Ask participants to take as long as they need and to leave the forms with a member of the **Planning Committee** as they leave. | Evaluation sheets |

## Day 3 — Religious Issues and Local Strategies

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 15 minutes | **Religious Issues Overview**<br>**Both workshop leaders** present a brief overview by together discussing the importance of religious issues when dealing with family violence. (See Sample Presentation "A Commentary on Religious Issues and Family Violence"). Include:<br>• Importance of clergy and social service roles<br>• Common sources of mistrust between the two groups<br>• Support for utilizing the skills of both groups in a cooperative approach | |
| 15 minutes | **Counseling a Battered Wife Who Raises Religious Concerns:** (a model role-play)<br>**One workshop leader** introduces this exercise, explaining that the two leaders will do a model role-play of a battered wife and her minister which will emphasize the wife's religious concerns. Participants are asked to observe the interactions, noting specific religious issues which arise and how they are addressed by the minister.<br>*This exercise enables participants to experience the crisis situation presented to a minister by a battered woman. A series of religious issues are raised and the dynamics which they represent are portrayed. Observing the role-play helps to understand how abstract issues are expressed in concrete situations.*<br>If one of the workshop leaders is not a minister, perhaps a member of the Planning Committee could play the ministerial role. If this is not possible, adapt the role-play so that the battered woman sees a counselor and raises the same issues with the counselor.<br>**Scenario:**<br>A woman comes to see her minister, indicating that things are not going well in her marriage, but she is not very specific. She assumes that "marriage must be like this." Her husband makes her do things in bed which she does not want to do, and she feels that she must obey her husband because the Bible says so, but she feels confused.<br>In asking specific questions, the minister clarifies the woman's concern and discovers that the situation is not one of sexual incompatibility. Rather, the woman's husband is physically and sexually abusing her. The minister helps the woman examine some of her assumptions about what God expects and wants for her life, her responsibilities to herself and her children, and her husband's responsibilities to the family. | |
| 10 minutes | **Brainstorm Religious Issues**<br>Ask the group to brainstorm any religious issues which arose in the role-play or which they anticipate might arise in a family dealing with abuse.<br>Post the lists and refer to them in the discussion during the Bible Study debriefing and the Pastoral Issues session. | Newsprint, markers |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *Keep the group on the task of brainstorming. Limit discussion of these issues, as they will be addressed in more detail later. Brainstorming means simply to list topics or concerns without discussing or analyzing them.* | |
| 30 minutes | **Bible Study**<br>Introduce this exercise by explaining that since many people who have religicus concerns about family violence refer specifically to the Bible, it is useful to look at some of the references most commonly made in order to understand how to address these concerns.<br>Divide the group into small groups, making sure that there is a mix in each group of both religious and secular participants. Give each group one Bible passage. Ask that someone in the group read the passage out loud. Then the small group discusses these questions as they relate to the passage:<br>• What interpretation of this passage could be useful to a victim of family violence?<br>• What interpretation of this passage could be harmful to a victim of family violence?<br>Ask that one person in each group act as recorder and list the group's comments.<br>Use the following Bible texts: Ephesians 5.21-23, Luke 9.1-6, Ephesians 6.1-4, Psalm 55.<br>*Some participants may feel some resistance to being asked to do Bible study. Reassure them that it is useful to try to understand how important Scripture is for many people. Service providers will be more able to affirm this source of strength for people if the providers are aware of how the Bible can be a resource, not just a block.* | Bibles (5-6) or passages written out on slips of paper |
| 15 minutes | **Break**<br>Invite participants to take a break for refreshments after they finish their small group work.<br>Ask participants to come back together as a large group. | Refreshments |
| 20 minutes | **Bible Study Debriefing**<br>Ask each small group to report to the large group:<br>• A summary of the Bible passage used<br>• A summary of their discussion of the questions<br>Note the small group reports on newsprint and post the newsprint. Clarify and add to the comments on the passages. | |
| 45 minutes | **Religious Issues: A Pastoral Perspective**<br>A **workshop leader** from the religious community presents a pastoral approach to the concerns which were raised in the original brainstorm list and in light of the discussion on the Bible. (See "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence"). | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *It is helpful for the leader presenting this section to be a member of the religious community as this is someone who tends to have greater credibility with workshop participants. However, if this is not possible, anyone who feels comfortable with the issues can present them.* | |
| | Encourage participants to comment and ask questions. | |
| 30 minutes | **Religious Counseling Situations: Role-plays** | |
| | Introduce this exercise by explaining that its purpose is to provide a situation in which participants can implement some of the new insights they have gained about religious concerns.<br>Divide the group into triads, assuring a mix of people from the religious community and secular social services in each triad.<br>Follow the same role-play procedure which was used in Day 2.<br>Assign one member of the triad the role of a client seeking help with a problem. The other role-playing member of the triad is the counselor/helper who plays her/himself and responds to the religious concerns presented.<br>Allow 10 minutes for each role play and 5 minutes for the triad to debrief each experience. | Roles typed on slips of paper |
| 15 minutes | **Debriefing** | |
| | Call the small groups back together into the large group and ask for comments or reactions to the experience.<br>*Besides offering skill-building practice for approaching religious concerns, this exercise also enables both the religious and secular helpers to view each other's role more realistically. The secular counselor is not necessarily expected to deal with the religious concerns in depth, but to assess the concerns and possibly to make a referral to a clergyperson in the community. The clergy are expected to be able to respond as needed to the religious concerns.* | |
| 1 hour | **Post-Test Questionnaire** | |
| | While **one workshop leader passes out the questionnaire, the other explains** to the group that this is the same questionnaire which was given out at the beginning of the workshop. A comparison of the results of the two questionnaires will give a measure of knowledge gained in the workshop.<br>Ask participants to write their birthdate on the front of the questionnaire and to add a small number "2" following it, in order to correlate with the pre-test.<br>*Giving the post-test at this point in DAY 3 places it at the end of the "information and skills" section of the workshop. This also avoids asking the participants to fill it out at the end of the workshop, when evaluation forms must also be filled out.*<br>*The Local Strategies section which follows is a working session which helps participants to consolidate their learning experience and to decide what they will do next in their own communities.*<br>Collect the questionnaires as people complete them and ask if there are any questions about the questionnaire. | Questionnaire (see Appendix) |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 20 minutes | **Local Resource Assessment**<br>There are two options for dealing with this section, depending upon the composition of the group attending the workshop.<br>**Option 1:**<br>If the group is made up mostly of people from the same community or county who would be working together in some capacity, then proceed as follows:<br>**One workshop leader** draws a Resource Assessment Grid* on the blackboard or on newsprint while **the other leader** introduces this exercise. Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to assess what resources are available in the community or county in order to respond to family violence.<br>The **workshop leader** asks the group to fill in the grid with the names of specific agencies, programs or groups available to serve specified needs. | Newsprint or blackboard |

***Resource Assessment Grid**

| | Victims | Abusers |
|---|---|---|
| **Children** | | |
| Physical abuse<br>Emotional abuse<br>Neglect | | |
| Child sexual abuse<br>Incest | | |
| **Adults** | | |
| Incest victims as children | | |
| Spouse abuse | | |

Indicate to the group that the **Planning Committee** will send a complete list of available resources to workshop participants in a follow-up mailing.

*Doing this exercise as a whole group encourages exchange of information about available resources and makes clear to the whole group where the gaps are in available services. This information is useful in the Local Strategy session which follows.*

**Option 2:** Newsprint, markers

If the workshop group is primarily composed of people from different communities or counties in the same region who would not be working closely together to provide services, then proceed as follows:

Introduce this exercise by explaining that its purpose is to assess what resources are available for responding to family violence in the participants' communities.

Ask members of the large group to divide itself into local teams, i.e., to gather in a small group with other participants from their own town or country.

Ask a member of the small group to draw the Resource Assessment Grid (see Option 1 above) on a sheet of newsprint. Then ask members of each small group to fill in their grid with

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | the names of specific agencies, programs, or groups in their community which are available to serve the specified needs.<br>When the grids are completed, ask each group to assess: (a) areas of strength, (b) gaps in service.<br>Use this information in the Local Strategy session which follow. | |
| 1 hour | **Local Strategies and Goal-Setting**<br>Again, two options are available, depending on the composition of the group. | Newsprint, markers |
| | **Option 1:**<br>For a group from the same area who will be working together:<br>Introduce this exercise by explaining that its purpose is to provide an opportunity for the total group to strategize and set goals for itself in order to continue its efforts beyond this training workshop.<br>Suggest to the group that there are several topical areas from which to choose:<br>• Community education<br>• In-service training for professionals/para-professionals<br>• Shelter for victims and children<br>• Transportation<br>• Networking of existing services<br>Ask if there are other areas of interest the group would like to add.<br>Then ask the group to divide according to interest areas: "Community education will meet in this corner, in-service training in the other corner."<br>Give a sheet of newsprint and a marker to each group. Ask each group to select 2 goals for the next 6 months. Then have each group discuss objectives and strategies for implementing the goals. The goals, objectives and strategies are written on newsprint to share later with the large group. (See example of goalsetting below.) | Newsprint, markers |
| | **Option 2:**<br>For a group made up of participants from different communities:<br>Tell participants that the purpose of this exercise is to help local teams to strategize and set goals for themselves so that the work accomplished together here will continue beyond this workshop.<br>Ask the participants to remain in their small groups from the previous exercise.<br>Ask each member of the team to state what her/his priority goal is in addressing family violence in their community during the next 6 months.<br>Then the team selects 2 goals to work on together. They list the goals, objectives, and strategies on a sheet of newsprint to share later with the large group. (See example of goalsetting below.*) | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *Goals must be specific and realistic. They need to reflect things which really interest group members. Remind participants that their plans are to be confined to projects which will be undertaken within a 6-month framework.* | |
| | ***Goalsetting Example:**<br>**Goal:** (What do you want to accomplish in the next 6 months?)<br>• To increase public awareness of the availability of the abused women's hotline in our county.<br>**Objectives:** (What specific steps are necessary to accomplish this goal?)<br>• To print and post flyers in local stores, restaurants, churches and taverns.<br>• To run a regular public service announcement in the weekly paper.<br>• To speak to 6 local groups (service clubs, churches, PTA, others).<br>**Strategy:** (How will the objectives be implemented and by whom?)<br>• To meet again this month as a subcommittee to coordinate plans. (Jim will facilitate meeting.)<br>• To try to get flyers donated from local printer. (Sue's responsibility.)<br>• To solicit speaking dates from local groups for the Fall. (Bill will coordinate.)<br>• To prepare public service announcement for approval by whole committee. (Mary will write and bring to next meeting.) | |
| | *Before the group can complete its goals, objectives, and strategies, some of the group members have to make a commitment to carry out the goals. This investment on the part of group members gives the group a sense that the tasks will be accomplished and that action will happen beyond the workshop.*<br>*Encourage group members to be as specific as possible, to set a next meeting date, if that is part of their strategy.* | |
| 10 minutes | **Break**<br>Invite the small groups to take a break when they complete their task and then return to the large group to report back. | Refreshments |
| 30 minutes | **Local Strategies and Goalsetting: Report Back**<br>Introduce this exercise by explaining that it is useful to hear from each local team or small group in order to know what kinds of things will be worked on during the next 6 months.<br>Ask a representative from each small group to report the goals, objectives, and strategies for that group. Post the newsprint on the wall to aid with the report. Invite the large group to comment or make suggestions on each report. | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 20 minutes | **Summary, Evaluation, and Adjournment**<br>Briefly summarize the day, thanking participants for their work together and for an opportunity to work with them.<br>While one leader passes out the final evaluation form (see Appendix), the other explains that this form asks for feedback on DAY 3 specifically and on the whole workshop generally.<br>Thank participants for their willingness to give feedback on the evaluations. Assure them that their feedback is very helpful to the leaders and to the Planning Committee.<br>**Adjourn** | Final evaluation forms |

# A Model 1-Day Workshop: Response to Family Violence in Rural Areas

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 30 minutes | **Registration** | |
| | Begin the workshop with a registration period preceding any formal session so that participants can sign-in and make name tags. | sign-in sheets (name, address, agency or congregation), name tags, markers, packets, refreshments |
| | One of the **workshop planners**, welcomes participants as they arrive, asking them to sign-in, etc. Direct participants to pick up packets of materials (if available) and help themselves to refreshments. | |
| 25 minutes | **Welcome, Introduction, and Overview** | |
| | One of the **workshop planners** begins the session by welcoming participants and thanking them for their willingness to participate in the workshop. Acknowledge local sponsorship by naming the co-sponsors or the names of the local planning committee members. | |
| | *Clarification of local sponsorship gives credibility to the event and can allay fears of "outsiders" coming in to present a workshop.* | |
| | Introduce the **workshop leaders,** giving background information on their expertise and experience with working on the problem of family violence. | |
| | *If the workshop leaders are members of the community, they will already be known to many participants. If they are outside resources, they will not be known: thank them for coming to lead the workshop.* | |
| | One of the **workshop leaders** then presents an overview of the problem of family violence as an introduction to the day (see Sample Presentation, "A Response to Family Violence: an Overview and Reflection):<br>• Definition of family violence (4 parts)<br>• Statistics showing extent of problem<br>• Need for both civic and religious involvement<br>• Need to decrease the level of acceptance of family violence in the community<br>• Need for religious and secular communities to work together on family violence | |
| | *The overview section sets the tone for the day and conveys a sense of the direction which the leaders will give the workshop. Thus, it is very important that this section be well-prepared and carefully planned.* | |
| | At the conclusion of the overview, the leader presents the agenda (on newsprint in front of the room), clarifying any questions participants may have. | Agenda printed on newsprint |
| 25 minutes | **Film or Slide Show on Domestic Violence** | |
| | Use either "Battered Women: Violence Behind Closed Doors" by J. Gary Mitchell Film Company or "Battered Women, a Hidden Crime" by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (see Bibliography for more information). | 16mm projector or slide projector, film or slides, cassette tape player, if needed |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 25 minutes | **Debriefing the Film** (small group exercise)<br><br>Ask participants to number off so as to have small groups of 5-7 each. As they gather in their groups, ask them to introduce themselves to each other and to discuss what they learned from the film about victims and abusers.<br><br>*Dividing the group by numbering off mixes up the small groups so that participants will meet and interact with new people.* | |
| 15 minutes | **Break**<br><br>Invite participants to take a break, have refreshments, and return to the large group. | Refreshments |
| 1 hour | **What is Battering?**<br><br>One **workshop leader** presents information on battering in the family focusing on the victims and the abusers, (see Sample Presentations, "Victims of Spouse Abuse" and "Persons Who Batter") including:<br>• Characteristics of both<br>• The battering cycle<br>• Battering as a problem which is not a function of the relationship and thus not responsive to traditional family therapy<br>• Impact on children<br>• Generational problem<br>• Correlation with alcohol/drugs<br><br>Respond to participants' questions in order to clarify the issues.<br><br>*Specific information (with emphasis on spouse battering) is provided in this section. Often questions will refer to common myths about family violence which need to be corrected at this time. Be sure to leave enough time for questions and comments from the group.* | |
| 1 hour | **Lunch**<br><br>If possible, serve a simple soup-and-sandwich lunch at the meeting.<br><br>*Serving food at the workshop site eliminates the need for participants to leave the meeting place and find lunch on their own. It decreases the chances of losing people and encourages community-building during the informal conversations among participants.*<br><br>Allow an hour for the meal.<br><br>*Even if serving, eating and clean-up don't take the entire hour, people need to have that much of a break after a heavy morning.* | food and drink |
| 1 hour | **Counseling Issues for Victims and Abusers**<br><br>One of the **workshop leaders** presents information on the needs of both victims and abusers, including:<br>• Assessment of frequency and severity of violence and abuse<br>• Assessment of danger to family members<br>• Support and assistance for victims and children | |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | • Intervention<br>• What each family member needs at this point of intervention<br>• Precautions for providing assistance<br>• Utilization of community resources<br>Respond to participants' questions to clarify issues.<br>*Both the "What is Battering?" section and this section can only provide basic information on the problem of family violence. In the amount of time provided, it is possible to give people enough information so that they begin to respond more appropriately. It is not enough time to prepare them to do long-term treatment with victims or abusers. It is only enough time to make it apparent to people how much more they need to know.* | |
| 1 hour | **Religious Issues** | |
| (10 min.) | One of the **workshop leaders** presents an introductory perspective on religious issues and family violence, including:<br>• Why religious issues are important<br>• Why and how the religious and secular communities need to work together to assist families<br>• Importance of clergy and social service roles<br>• Common reasons for mistrust between the two groups<br>(See "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence"). | |
| (5 min.) | **Brainstorm Religious Issues** | |
| | Ask the group to brainstorm any religious issues or concerns which they anticipate might arise in a family dealing with violence or abuse.<br>*Keep the group on the task of brainstorming. Limit discussion of these issues which will be addressed in more detail later. Brainstorming means simply to list topics or concerns without discussing or analyzing them.* | newsprint, markers, tape |
| (45 min.) | **Religious Issues: A Pastoral Perspective** | |
| | The **workshop leader** responds to the list of concerns which were developed from the group by discussing pastoral approaches which can be applied to working with family members. The leader may need to select the priority issues if the list is long. These would include: marriage covenant, separation and divorce, suffering, forgiveness, honoring one's parents. (See "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence").<br>*It is helpful for the leader presenting this section to be a part of the religious community, clergy or lay. This will add credibility and authority to what is said. However, if this is not possible, anyone who feels comfortable with the issues can present this whole section.*<br>Encourage participants to comment and ask questions. | |
| 15 minutes | **Break** | |
| | Invite participants to take a break and have refreshments. | refreshments |

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| 45 minutes | **Local Issues and Goal Setting** | |
| (10 min.) | In the large group, a **workshop leader** asks the group to brainstorm what they see to be the main blocks to assisting families in which there is abuse in the rural, semi-rural, or small town setting. List these on newsprint. Refer to the "Commentary on Rural Issues and Family Violence" for any major areas which might be overlooked by the group. | newsprint, tape, markers |
| (5 min.) | Then ask the group what they see to be the priority areas for work in their area. These will be the basis for Goal Setting in interest groups. These might include:<br>• Transportation<br>• In-service training for staff and volunteers in the area<br>• Shelter services<br>• Coordination of available services<br>• Community education<br>• Crisis/advocacy services | |
| (30 min.) | Ask the group to divide itself according to these interest groups for the purpose of setting realistic goals and objectives for their work together in their own community. Give each group newsprint and a marker and ask them to write down 2 goals and objectives which they as a group agree to work together on during the next 6 months. | |

*Be very clear about instructions for this task. The purpose of this task is to solidify some working groups which will actually implement skills and experience learned from this one-day workshop when they return to their communities. Setting goals and objectives helps to keep a group from feeling overwhelmed with the tasks ahead and helps stimulate individuals to take responsibility for specific tasks.*

*Goal Setting: Goals should be specific and realistic. They should reflect projects which really interest group members. Remind participants that they should be planning within a 6-month framework: what do we want to accomplish in the next 6 months?*

**Example:**

**Goal:** (What do you want to accomplish?)

- Increase public awareness of the availability of the abused women's hotline in our county.

**Objectives:** (What specific steps are necessary to accomplish this goal?)

- Print flyers and post in local stores, restaurants, churches and taverns.
- Run a regular public service announcement in the weekly paper.
- Speak to 6 local groups (service clubs, churches, PTA, etc.)

**Strategy:** (Implementing the objectives: Who? How?)

- Meet again this month as a subcommittee to coordinate plans (Jim).
- Try to get flyers donated from local printer (Sue).
- Solicit speaking dates from local groups for the fall (Bill).
- Prepare public service announcement for approval by whole committee (Mary).

| Time | Content and Procedures | Materials Needed |
|---|---|---|
| | *Once the group has completed the exercise of developing goals, objectives, and strategies, some of the group members have made a commitment to carry out the goals. This assures their investment and, hopefully, their willingness to follow through with the tasks. It also gives the group a sense that something is going to happen beyond this workshop.*<br>*Encourage group members to be as specific as possible: at least set another meeting date for the subcommittee if that is part of their strategy.* | |
| 15 minutes | **Debrief Goal-Setting**<br>Ask participants to return to the large group. The **workshop leader** introduces this exercise by explaining that it is useful to hear from each interest group to provide the whole group a sense of the kinds of projects which will be undertaken during the next 6 months.<br>Ask a representative from each small group to report the goals and objectives for their group. Post the group's newsprint worksheet on the wall to aid with the report. Invite the large group to comment or make suggestions on each report. | |
| 10 minutes | **Summary**<br>The **workshop leader** briefly summarizes the work of the day, thanking participants for their efforts and for the opportunity to work with them. Reiterate the importance of the cooperative work between the religious and secular communities and compliment them on their willingness to begin working together. | |
| 10 minutes | **Evaluation**<br>The **workshop leader** passes out the evaluation form explaining that the group's feedback on this form will be useful to the workshop leaders and to the planning committee. Thank them for their willingness to help in this way. | evaluation sheets (see Appendix) |
| | **Adjourn** | |

# Presentations for General Public Education

In local communities, it is often possible to speak to civic and religious groups. A community education program will utilize these groups as a good means of reaching many concerned and active citizens. The following tips and outline are suggested as a starting point in answer to the question, "If I only have 30 minutes-1 hour, what do I say about family violence?" (See Sample Presentations, "A Response to Family Violence: an Overview and Reflection")

## Tips for Speakers

1. Know the audience and shape your presentation accordingly. For example, you can expect some **initial** resistance toward the subject of family violence when speaking to a women's fellowship group. The resistance stems from the audience's attempt to deny the problem of family violence. However, you can capitalize on their empathy and compassion for the abused woman as the women begin to see themselves in equally vulnerable situations.

In speaking to men's service clubs, also expect resistance and even defensiveness. Avoid focusing on "men" as the problem. Talk about family violence as a problem that hurts all of us and for which we all pay a price, economically and emotionally.

2. In preparation, identify your goals for the presentation, such as: (a) to introduce yourself and your group to a new audience; (b) to acquaint people with the problem of family violence and provide some **basic** information on the subject; (c) to request audience support in specific ways (money, time, materials, etc.)

Your primary concern is to enlist the audience as co-operative allies in the community. Approach them positively. Even if you may feel hesitant or reluctant to approach a particular group because of past experiences with individuals, remember that you are there to enlist their support, not to place blame or criticize previous actions.

> *Let's say that you are speaking to the County Ministerial Association. Three months ago you had a confrontation with one minister about a client. Try not to let your anger and frustration contaminate your attitude toward the group. Remember that your conflict was with only one of them; you will probably gain support from others there if you approach them with respect and openness.*

3. Allow time for discussion. People learn more and become more interested in a subject when they have opportunities to ask questions and share ideas with you and each other.

4. If you are speaking as part of a dinner meeting or program, try to attend the dinner rather than appear just in time for your presentation. Use this informal time to meet people. This will give you a much better sense of the group as you address the members there and it will increase their interest in listening to your message.

5. Take along another member of your local task force. This will make it possible for two of you to get acquainted with the group and will probably make you, the speaker, more comfortable knowing that you are not there alone. It also gives you someone with whom to debrief the experience afterwards.

6. Clothes do make a difference. Wear clothes that will reassure your audience of your civic concern and responsibility, i.e. clothing with which they can identify in some way. Styles which the audience may see as atypical or unusual will be distracting to them and will distract them from hearing your message. If they are already hesitant about the subject, "inappropriate" clothes (in their eyes) will be their excuse for discounting you altogether.

## Outline for Short Presentation on Family Violence

I. Introduction
   - A. Who we are and what we do as an organization
   - B. Why I am involved in this organization

II. Definition: What Is Family Violence? (see Sample Presentation, "The Person Who Batters")
   - A. Physical abuse
   - B. Psychological abuse
   - C. Sexual abuse
   - D. Destruction of property or pets

III. Concrete Situations as an Example
   - A. Excerpts from the "Letter from a Battered Wife", in Del Martin's *Battered Wives*, or
   - B. A composite story from your experience working with families experiencing domestic violence (be careful about confidentiality in your community)

IV. Dynamics of Family Violence
   - A. Battering is a learned reaction to stress
   - B. Battering Cycle

V. Traditional Responses (religious groups, mental health services, legal system, etc.)
   - A. Silence
   - B. Denial and excuses (give specific examples)

VI. New Responses Needed
   A. Support for victims and family violence offenders (be specific)
   B. Education and public awareness

VII. How You Can Help: What We Need from Your Group (be specific and don't be afraid to ask)
   A. Money
   B. Volunteers
   C. Material goods (for shelters, etc.)
   D. Letters to state and national legislatures
   E. People willing to talk about this problem and stop ignoring it

# III. Sample Presentations and Commentaries

*This section contains:*

A Response to Family Violence: An Overview and Reflection

The Person Who Batters

Victims of Spouse Abuse

The Incest Offender

Family Violence Directed Against Children

Non-Offending Parents of Children Who are Victims of Incest

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence

A Commentary on Rural Issues and Family Violence

# A Response to Family Violence: An Overview and Reflection

*This section was prepared as an introductory presentation for a one-day workshop. The form retained is that of the presentation itself.*

I sense that there is an epidemic in our country — an insidious epidemic that is destroying families and individuals all around us. It is an epidemic of family violence. This sense comes from several sources:

- Newspaper headlines such as, "Man shoots children, wife, kills self," "Incest offender ordered to receive treatment," "Woman kills husband; claims self-defense".
- Phone calls we receive asking for help: from victims, from people who abuse, from ministers, friends and family members of victims.
- Increased media attention to family violence.

## Family Violence Definition

We define family violence descriptively; that is, we define it in terms of what actually is happening in people's lives. I would like to describe to you what we mean when we speak of family violence so that we can all approach the problem from a common foundation. The definition of family violence is broken into four parts:

- The first, and most overt, is **physical violence**. Acts of physical violence include someone throwing an object at another person, pushing, slapping, beating, threatening or using weapons against someone. Physical violence may produce bruises, bodily or emotional scars, broken bones, broken relationships, broken lives; sometimes physical violence leads to suicide or homicide.
- **Psychological abuse** is the second form of family violence. Many people assume that psychological abuse refers to verbal arguments. In fact, acts of psychological abuse may be compared to acts of brainwashing that occur in wartime. Depriving a person of sleep or food and verbally undermining her/his sense of self-worth is an example of this form of abuse. In a concentration camp setting, a POW may be awakened and forced to answer questions never knowing if the next time s/he is awakened s/he will be killed. Psychological abuse is effective because the victim of the abuse is also threatened with acts of physical violence. Victims of abuse often report that the psychological abuse feels worse than the physical abuse. (One woman reported that her husband made her get down on her hands and knees and bark like a dog. Although the woman had also been badly beaten, she felt this humiliation was the worst abuse she experienced.)
- The third form of family abuse is **sexual abuse**. When sexual abuse occurs between spouses, it is "marital rape." When sexual abuse is inflicted on children or teenagers by an older family member, it is incestuous assault. (This is most common between father and daughter.)
- **Destruction of property and pets** comprises the fourth category of family abuse. The destruction is very specific in that the object or pet harmed or destroyed belongs to the victim of the abuse. For example, when a woman is being abusive toward her husband, she may knock out the windows of his car with a hammer. If a man is abusive toward his wife, he might destroy the set of china handed down through her family or kill her dog. Children have described this abusive behavior to us as a means of "getting at someone" and making it look like an accident. For example, a young girl told me that when she is angry with her sister, she breaks something "accidently" by knocking it off her sister's shelf when she dusts the room.

My sense of an epidemic of family violence, as I have defined the problem, is sadly confirmed by current statistics:

- **A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky** found that 21% of over 169,000 married Kentucky women report having at least one incident of physical violence, 1 in 10 of them reported an incident occured within the last year.[1]
- Murray Straus conducted a nationwide survey of the extent of spouse abuse in the U.S. His results indicate that 1.8 million wives are beaten by their husbands each year. He states, that, "the true incidence rate is probably closer to 50 or 60% of all couples" as opposed to the 28% of couples willing to describe violent acts in a mass interview survey.[2]
- The U.S. Department of Justice reports that the possibility of an actual attack and the likelihood of sustaining injury because of an attack increases the more intimate the victim-offender relationship.[3]

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[1]U.S. Department of Justice, LEAA, *A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky*, 1979, p. 1.

[2]Murray A. Straus, "Wife Beating: How Common and Why?", *Victimology: An International Journal*, Vol. 2, 1977-78, No. 3-4, pp. 443-458.

[3]U.S. Department of Justice, "Intimate Victims: A Study of Violence Among Friends and Relatives," January 1980, p. 13.



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• 1 out of 5 female children and 1 out of 11 male children will be sexually abused by the age of 18 years.[4] Fifty percent of the sexual abuse of children is due to incest.[5]

Acts of family violence — child sexual abuse and battering between family members — are all devastating acts whether inflicted on women or men, and regardless of the victim's age. Violent acts are most commonly inflicted on the most vulnerable members of society: women, children, and the elderly. Acts of violence within the family victimize people where they are most vulnerable — in the context of their family where they expect nurturance, love and acceptance . . . not abuse.

Thus, when these acts occur between family members, the violation of their bodies and spirits is greater than a similar occurrence between strangers. The trust which existed between people is destroyed. Psalm 55 speaks to this experience. (The following is excerpted.)

My heart aches in my breast,
Death's terrors assail me,
fear and trembling descend on me,
horror overwhelms me.
And I say,
"Oh for the wings of a dove
to fly away and find rest."
How far I would take my flight,
and make a new home in the desert!
Were it an enemy who insulted me,
I could put up with that;
had a rival got the better of me,
I could hide from him.
But you, a man of my own rank,
a colleague and a friend,
to whom sweet conversation bound me
in the house of God!
He has attacked his friends,
he has gone back on his word;
though his mouth is smoother than butter,
he has war in his heart:
his words may soothe more than oil,
but they are naked swords.
Unload your burden on to Yahweh,
who will support you;
and will never permit
the virtuous to falter.

## Silence and Denial

People who confront family violence in their own lives need support and assistance to move forward and away from this destructive pattern. Otherwise, this experience may shape the rest of their lives by severely limiting relationships with others or by pushing them to become or continue to be an abuser of others.

Until recently the vicious cycle of violence has gone unchallenged. Society's response has been SILENCE AND DENIAL. We simply have not been able to acknowledge how widespread the problems are. Our silence has created a vicious cycle for victims of abuse and for people who abuse: **they often do not admit to the problem or seek help because of the stigma of family violence.** We in the religious community tell ourselves, "These things don't happen here, not to our people. A good Christian person would not be a victim. A good Christian person would not abuse someone else. Jewish families are not abusive."

People confronted with family violence also believe that these problems do not happen to "Good Christian or Jewish people." So, out of guilt and shame, the victims and abusers remain silent. Consequently, congregations and clergy continue to believe that "these things do not happen here."

Victims of abuse and the people who abuse sometimes do not seek help from community agencies because they fear that their religious questions will go unanswered. As a result, many of us never hear or understand the pain of either the abused or those who abuse. Our dialogue of silence communicates the message that family violence does not occur so long as we do not speak of it.

The "Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky" indicates that in 40-50% of the cases of physical spouse abuse the victims turn to no one for help. When they do seek out someone to discuss the problem they turn most often to a family member (61%) and/or a friend (49%). Of those who do seek help, a minister is contacted in 14% of the cases, a psychologist in 11%, a marriage counselor in 4%, and a social worker in 4%.

There have been times when people have come forth, seeking help, and as religious or secular helpers we have not been prepared to respond supportively. Consider what you have done or how you would now handle the following situations:

- A woman who is having trouble in her marriage and finally tells you she was raped at 11 years old
- A teenager who runs away from home because of incestuous abuse
- A mother who beats her children
- A father who confesses that he is sexually abusing his children
- A beaten woman, with a 3- and 4-year-old in your office, afraid to go home

We may want to help, but find these situations overwhelming.

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[4]Finklehor, D. *Sexually Victimized Children*. The Free Press. New York. 1979.

[5]Sexual Assault Center. Harborview Medical Center. caseload statistics for 1979, children 16 years of age and under. Seattle. Washington. 1979.

In addition, social service providers and the religious community have some painful history to overcome. Our history is distrust of one another and fear of working together. At times we have subjected the people who sought our help to even greater pain:

- The battered wife is held responsible for the violence and told to "go home and be a better wife; forgive him, he's confused."
- The mother is unchallenged for beating her children "because they need discipline."
- The father who abuses his wife and children and is not confronted because he is "head of the household" and can do as he chooses with "his" family.

## Responses to the Problem

Today — locally, regionally, and nationally — many religious and secular groups are working together to provide services to people experiencing intra-family violence. Family violence affects us all, directly or indirectly. Each of us can help break the silence that shrouds family violence so that we can begin to confront the problem.

> We did a 4-week workshop, 2½ hours per week, with a ministerial association. In the third session one of the ministers stated that he learned of one rape case and two cases of incest in his congregation since the workshop began. He could not understand why people in his congregation were suddenly being victimized. We pointed out that he had announced from the pulpit that he was involved in a workshop on family violence; his congregation then recognized that he was interested in the problem and therefore would be open to talking about family violence.
>
> A volunteer with our Speaker's Bureau works as a counselor with a community mental health center. Clients are asked several questions about their life experiences during the intake process, but no questions are asked about sexual or physical assault. The counselor started asking his clients whether they had ever been victims of physical or sexual assault. As a result, he learned that a majority of the clients who come to the mental health center for counseling have been victimized.

Family violence is a widespread social problem with serious ramifications for many people. As active and concerned people we need to respond to family violence in 3 ways: pastorally, prophetically, preventively.

**Pastorally**

- We must **respond supportively** to those confronted with family violence.
- We need to **increase our skills and knowledge** about family violence.
- We need to be aware of **community resources** and willing to work together to provide needed assistance. **A cooperative response** acknowledges expertise within both the religious and secular communities.
- We need to be able and willing to deal with **religious concerns and questions** as they arise.

**Prophetically**

- By our **visible and vocal concern**, we can help overcome the conspiracy of silence which has surrounded family violence in the past. We may be a "voice crying in the wilderness," but we voice an important message to those who will hear: "People are not for hitting or abuse."
- We must clearly assert that **abuse of persons, particularly in the family, is a blasphemy against the most sacred of God's creations, human beings.**

**Preventively**

- **Education and clear messages** which support non-violence in families are needed.
- **Steps can be taken to prevent violence in families** through marriage preparation, parenting skills training, family life education.

Each of us can help to change the attitude which accepts family violence as inevitable — and which hesitates to discuss it because the problem is private or shameful. Some of the ways we can work together to provide assistance are:

- Developing a ministerial referral pool for people expressing religious concerns/ questions
- Giving financial assistance to programs
- Volunteering on a task force or crisis line
- Serving on boards of community agencies
- Providing needed materials (blankets to shelters) to programs

A major social problem is making itself known to us. We can cooperate with others in the community to share in the healing task with broken people and families.

If we care about saving the family and our communities, we must address family violence. This workshop today is an important step, an opportunity for discussion and dialogue which is needed in every community. I am glad that each of you is here so that we can all be about this important work together.



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# The Person Who Batters

Battering in the family is a democratic activity: it occurs within all age, racial, socio-economic and religious groups. We would like to believe that battering happens only on **that** side of the town, in **that** congregation, to **those** people. Unfortunately, that is not so.

The following four categories are included in our definition of battering:

**Physical Abuse.** Physical abuse is the most overt form of battering and includes pushing, hitting, beating, inflicting injury with weapons, homicide, suicide.

**Psychological Abuse.** Psychological abuse is more than verbal arguments between family members. Psychological abuse can be compared to brainwashing: a person's self-worth is systematically destroyed through harassment, threats, deprivation of food and sleep. One woman reported that her husband would wake her up when he arrived home at about 2 am every morning and force her to listen to his opinions on the state of the world, his job, her. She then had to get up at 7 am and go to work. In time, the loss of sleep and the fear of what her husband would do when he woke her up, wore her down psychologically.

**Sexual Abuse.** When sexual abuse occurs between spouses, it is "marital rape." When sexual abuse is inflicted on children or teenagers by an older family member, it is incestuous assault. (This is most common between father and daughter.)

**Destruction of Property/Pets.** The destruction of property/pets may be another way that a person who batters is abusive. The wife who is abusive toward her husband may take a hammer to the window of his car; the husband who is abusive toward his wife may break the china that was handed down to her from her grandmother. The destruction of the objects may also carry the message, "This time it's the car/the china; next time, I could physically hurt you."

Any of these forms of abuse can be inflicted on any family member by any other family member: spouse against spouse, parent against child, sibling against sibling, adult child or teenager against older parent.

Today we are focusing on battering that occurs betweens spouses. I would like to begin by sharing information about the person who batters. We will examine the roots of the violent behavior, the battering cycle and the counseling concerns which need to be addressed by those working with violent people.

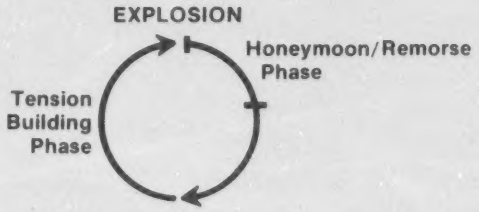
## Roots and Dynamics

There are many sources of stress in our society — economic pressures, work-related stresses, lack of housing, stresses caused by intimate relationships, family pressures. Some people deal with stress by crying, some problem-solve, some people withdraw, and so forth. Battering is **one** way of dealing with stress that **some** people have learned. Our society accepts the myth that we will all become violent when we are pushed to our breaking point. However, many of us respond to extreme pressure with non-violent behaviors such as those just mentioned.

Where do people learn to use violence against their spouses or other family members to deal with stress? Many people who batter learned this behavior from their own families. They may have seen abuse between their parents or been physically abused themselves. Their family experiences taught them that it is appropriate and safe to use abusive behavior within the family. Our society seems to condone violence with messages from many sources (including the religious community) which support and encourage violence, particularly when it is directed at weaker persons.

Family violence occurs as a frustration of limited tools for dealing with conflict and stress. The violence is **not** a function of the relationship between the person being abused and the person who is abusive. If a man batters his spouse who then leaves him, he will probably enter a new relationship and continue the abuse in the new relationship **because he has not learned to deal with the everyday conflict in his life except by striking out against his spouse.**

## The Battering Cycle




Everyone experiences conflict and stress. Some people have ways of dealing with stress as it develops. Others, such as those who batter, have limited stress-reducing skills and the pressure builds up for them, like a pressure cooker. The stress can come from a variety of sources until the pressure becomes unbearable and there is an explosion. Following the explosion there may be a "honeymoon" phase during which the person who batters is repentent and promises never to batter again. On the other hand, some people deny that

their violent behavior is inappropriate and deny any responsibility for the battering — hence, omitting the "honeymoon" phase altogether.[1]

There may be a period of calm following the battering incident. Eventually, the conflict and stress builds up and the person who batters again resorts to violence to temporarily relieve the pressure.

Using violence to relieve tension is done selectively. Even when work tensions comprise a major source of stress for spouse batterers, few apply physical violence against their supervisors — they recognize that they would be fired for abusive behavior in the workplace. Instead, the battering takes place in an environment where they think they can get away with it: the home.

## Profile of the Man Who Batters

People who batter come from every imaginable social group, race, class, occupation, profession, geography, religious affiliation, age. The majority of people who batter are men. Although the research shows that women also batter, many instances of abuse by wives against husbands is in response to blows initiated by husbands. Moreover, men practice the most dangerous and injurious forms of violence (beating, using a knife or gun) more than wives. A disproportionately large number of attacks by men seems to occur when the women are pregnant, thus posing a danger to the unborn child.[2]

*The following information about men who batter draws upon the work of Dr. Anne Ganley, Psychologist, American Lake V. A. Hospital, Tacoma, Washington.*

Men who batter are not evil people. Many of them are very charming, very lovable, and valued as outstanding citizens in their community. Their violent behavior manifests itself only when the men experience high levels of stress. Friends and other family members may never see the violence because it is usually perpetrated in the privacy of the home. Many of the battered mates report that the men are very good fathers when they are not violent. Research indicates that about one-third of the men who batter their mates also beat their children.

Men who batter have a low tolerance for frustration and stress. They talk about having two speeds: (1) fine and, (2) rage. They rarely acknowledge emotions or feelings (e.g., joy, hurt, caring) between these two extremes. These men need to be helped to identify and deal with a broader range of feelings before their emotions accelerate into rage.

Men who batter have low self-esteem. Many of them set unrealistic goals for themselves and then see themselves as failures when they do not achieve the goals. They regard themselves as failures whether or not they are seen as successful professionally to outsiders. The following story is an example of the unrealistic achievement standard those who batter set for themselves, told by a man who approached a minister after the minister had preached on family violence:

> The man stated that he had battered his wife for 10 years, until the abuse finally ended the marriage. Now he was working not to be abusive in other relationships. He told the minister, "There were just so many things I had to do with my life; I wanted to own my own house by the time I was 40 years old." Because he was unable to meet the goals he had set for himself, he imposed his anger and frustration on his family.

Men who batter also have unrealistic expectations of their partners. They believe that, "She should know what I want when I want it, and I shouldn't have to tell her."

Similarly, men who batter credit themselves with poor social skills. This is true even if outsiders regard them as "the life of the party."

### Dependency

Men who batter are extremely dependent on the relationship with their spouse. They do not like their violent behavior but see no options to the behavior and no options to change in the relationship. However, they feel so dependent on the relationship that they are terrified by the possibility that their mate might do something to leave the relationship. The men rely so heavily upon their mates that they are willing to do anything to keep their mates, including killing them or maiming them. Just as the victims of abuse believe they cannot survive outside of the relationship, so do the people who abuse them.

### Jealousy

Extreme jealousy and possessiveness toward the abused victim is symptomatic of the dependency of men who batter. These men want to completely control the person they abuse. A batterer rationalizes that he loves his spouse and wants to take care of her and that his controlling her life is for her own good. We had a case of a professional man who was battering his wife who worked as a clerk in a downtown office. He would call her every 20 minutes to find out what she was

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[1] The "Cycle Theory of Violence" was developed by Dr. Lenore Walker and is detailed in her book, *The Battered Woman*.

[2] Straus, Murray A. "Wife Beating: How Common and Why?" *Victimology: An International Journal*. Vol. 2, 1977-78, No. 3-4, p. 449.



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doing and to make sure that she was at her desk. At lunch he would go down and sit with her in the office and watch her eat because he was worried that she would have an affair on her lunch hour if he did not watch her. As a result of this series of intrusions from her husband, the company felt that the woman's harassment distracted her from her job. The woman subsequently lost her job.

**Depression**

It is common for people who batter to be severely depressed, even suicidal, particularly if they realize that the victim of the abuse is taking steps to leave or change the situation. A group for abused women who wanted counseling but who did not want to leave their homes was formed. Eight women attended the first meeting. The husbands of two of the women committed suicide following the first session. Men who batter are at high risk, a danger to themselves as well as to other people. Newspaper headlines report: "Father kills two children, shoots wife and kills self." This story of homicide and suicide centers on a family whose history probably speaks of violence which escalated to a lethal conclusion.

**Relationship between Battering and Alcohol**

Alcoholism and battering are two widespread problems in our society and there is a high correlation between them. However, one does not cause the other. There are those batterers who do not drink and alcoholics who do not batter. Dr. Ganley, American Lake V.A. Hospital, finds the following relationships between alcohol and battering in her caseload of men who batter: (1) men who are alcoholics and batter when they are drunk, (2) men who are alcoholics and batter whether they are drunk or sober, (3) social drinkers who batter, (4) men who are teetotalers and batter. For some men who batter, the battering behavior is closely tied with the abuse of alcohol, and alcohol treatment can successfully stop the violent behavior. However, there are many for whom **both** the alcoholism and the battering behavior must be dealt with or the violence will not stop. In these cases, treatment for one problem exclusive of the other will not stop both problems. For example, alcohol treatment alone for an alcoholic who batters, drunk or dry, will not stop the battering behavior; the man will now be a sober batterer.

Assess the relationship between alcohol and battering for each client. If necessary, refer the man to an alcoholism program. In addition, refer him for treatment for the battering behavior.

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**Discounting the Violence**

Men who batter will minimize, deny and lie about their violent behavior. Most of them cannot face what they are doing and so will internally as well as externally minimize the behavior. A man who batters may say and genuinely mean, "I only pushed her." His victim fell down the stairs and is in the hospital with a broken collarbone as a result. Men who batter need help to realize the consequences of their violence on other people's lives. If anyone seeks help from you for violent behavior, ask specific questions about the behavior and take the person seriously. The person seeking help is probably minimizing the extent of the violence.

## Counseling Concerns

**Assessment**

Assess the danger and lethality of the battering situation. Ask clear, direct questions:

- Did you push her? Hit her? Hit her with an open hand? Closed fist?
- How often does this happen?
- When was the last time?

Find out how the person seeking help perceives the situation. Ask him, "What do you see as the most important problem(s)?" (Avoid using **feeling** or **touching** words.) "How would your life be different if you were not violent?" "How would your relationship change?"

Men who batter need the chance to talk about their problems with someone willing to work with them. They need to hear there is hope, that they **can** change their violent behavior. They need a clear message that the violence has to stop and that they have the power to stop it. The men need support from their congregation, minister/rabbi, friends and family. They need to hear that we are concerned **and** we do not condone the violent behavior.

**Alternatives to Violence**

People who batter often seek an instant solution, some action that "works" as quickly as hitting. One alternative that is both immediate and suspends the action is a "time out." A time out, a physical separation between the victim and the abuser, helps both of them. Sending the guy out for a walk to cool off is a solution sometimes used by police; it is a good idea except that the man faces the same situation when he returns. Taking a walk is one form that a "time out" can take. If the man returns and he is instantly angry, he must leave again. This continues until the man no longer wants to hit, or is so tired that he could not hit if he wanted to.

This "time out" or physical separation, can also be instituted for a longer period of time. A period of a few days to a few weeks allows the victim a time of rest from abuse and also encourages the abuser to consider the seriousness of the problem. During this "time out" the abuser may realize the importance of seeking help to end his violent behavior.

**What the Men Need**

Men who abuse need to hear that the violence must stop and that they have the power to stop it. They have probably been blaming the violence on the relationship, alcohol, or other external factors. The message that they have the power to control their violence tells batterers that they have alternatives to hitting. When they feel angry or frustrated they can take a walk, call a friend, work out in the gym. Men who batter must understand that if they choose to hit over other alternatives, they are hitting **because they want to hit**, not because they are out of control or have no options. People who work with men who batter often ask their clients to sign a contract that stipulates that the men will not hit and that they have the power to control their own violent behavior. This contract allows both parties to monitor the violent behavior.

Men who batter need to know that there is NO justification for violence in the family and that it has to stop. This message must come from a number of sources: family, friends, counselors, clergy, criminal justice workers. Families in which there is violence may need to deal with other important problems, but **first the violence stops.**

The men need to know about family violence: they need to know that **the problem is their violence;** they need to know about the battering cycle, and that violence is learned behavior, often learned from parents who were violent.

Furthermore, the men need to know that they are in control of their behavior. They need to know they are **not** hopeless and they **do** have the capability to change and to stop their violent behavior.

**Motivation for Counseling**

When men who batter seek help for their behavior they may do so in one of the following ways:

- A man seeks out a minister and says he wants to pray to be a better husband.
- A man contacts a shelter or mental health professional and says his wife has left him and he wants help to get her back.
- A man sees an alcoholism counselor to help him stop drinking and abusing his wife.

However, few people who batter seek out help on their own to stop their violent behavior. Those who do refer themselves to therapy often leave after a few sessions.

The men who batter rarely want to deal with the problem of their violence and need to be pressured to do so.

The criminal justice system can be used as leverage to pressure people who batter into entering and completing therapy. We find that pressure from this source is usually needed to encourage the men to stay in treatment programs. This implies that we need to be more willing to use the legal system and, furthermore, we must press the criminal justice system for greater action in family violence cases.

## Other Concerns

Men who batter need to decrease their dependence on their victims and they must reduce their own isolation from other people. Finally, the men need to learn to identify and accept **all** of their feelings and learn appropriate ways to express them.

Rarely is physical abuse the only unhealthy and unhappy element in a family which is marred by extensive violence. The men, their partners, and other family members may need other kinds of help including parenting skills, communication skills, assertiveness training, conflict management, and so forth.

We must emphasize that our first priority is ending the violence. The other concerns in the family cannot be adequately addressed as long as violence or the threat of violence is present.



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# Victims of Spouse Abuse

## Visible Characteristics

I would like to start by describing common physical characteristics of battered spouses. These characteristics are also typical of people who are depressed, so they will probably be familiar to you in that context.

**Frustration and Depression.** Battered women often come across as being long-suffering, as having a martyr-like endurance of suffering and a high tolerance for frustration. Depression manifests itself in a variety of behaviors: hysteria, complaints about feeling depressed or tired, psychosomatic complaints (e.g., "I feel terrible; I'm not getting enough sleep; my back hurts; I seem to hurt all over.")

**Social Isolation.** Another visible characteristic of people who have been battered is a gradually increasing social isolation. By the time mental health people see them, these persons may literally have no network of support left. They no longer visit members of their families because the person who abuses them has said, "You know, everytime you see your family it really upsets me, and I don't think you should see them anymore." Or, "That friend of yours is such a nag and drives me crazy, and I don't think you ought to ask her over here anymore."

After careful consideration with a counselor, a victim of battering may realize that there are some people still remaining in her social network; however, she initially will perceive that no one is available to support her. Those of us in the religious community may notice that this victim of battering comes to events and services less and less often.

**Self-Destructive Patterns.** Suicide is a critical problem with people who are victims of abuse. Their problem-solving skills for ending the abuse are poor, and one of the solutions they see is to die. "I could kill myself and then it would be all over." Or, "It would be better for my children if i were dead."

The victim of battering with suicidal tendencies may, in fact, have a history of suicide attempts and so may not be taken seriously by mental health professionals. This person is also a high risk for both drug and alcohol abuse.

## Characteristics Relating to Mate

**Emotional and Economic Dependencies.** The battered person is very dependent on her mate. She probably depends on him, not only emotionally, but financially as well. She may not have job skills. She probably has young children and feels as though she has very few options open to her. Even when the victim of battering is working, the battering spouse probably controls most of the money.

In the film, "Battered Women — Violence Behind Closed Doors," one of the abused women refers to "eternal hope," the unlimited patience for a magical formula which is going to solve all of the family's problems. Each of the four women portrayed has an unrealistic hope and belief in her partner's promises that the violence will never happen again. She clings to this hope because he tells her that he's going to change and she wants to believe this is true.

**Distrust and Double-Binding.** The batterer often accuses his spouse of being seductive, of having affairs. To prove that she is loyal, the battered spouse will continue to isolate herself: "I will prove to you that I am not being seductive with all those people; I will not even **see** those people. I won't be provocative at that party; I won't even **go** to that party."

The double bind that the abused spouse constantly finds herself in is that the batterer doesn't believe her no matter what she says or does.

The isolation, then, is a gradual process. Containment by her mate works because the woman believes that the reason for containing her is because he cares. He says, "I don't want you to go to the store. I'll do all the grocery shopping from now on. You know it's really hard on your back carrying all those groceries. What if the car breaks down on the way? You wouldn't know what to do."

The batterer constantly tells his spouse that he is doing all of these things because he cares about her. His comments also tell her that she can't take care of herself and that she needs him to take care of her.

**Excuses and Self-Blame.** The battered spouse will constantly rationalize about her spouse's violent behavior. The most common excuse is that he simply can't help it when he's violent. Numerous excuses are given for reasons: (1) he drinks, (2) he just "loses it" sometimes, (3) too much stress at work.

The battered spouse will accept guilt for her partner's violent behavior, trying to find something that she did to cause it.

It is common for people in any kind of crisis to try to make sense out of what happened (e.g. rape, death of a loved one). One of the ways that people who have been victimized attempt to take back control over their lives is to figure out what went wrong, resolving never to do that behavior again so that they will not be victimized again. Battered women try to figure out what **they can do** to make the violence stop.

**Victim's Low Self-Esteem.** Finally, the battered woman has a poor sexual self-image. Her spouse may tell her, "You know, it's a good thing that I keep you around because nobody else would want you." She believes what he says, partly because she has no one else around to contradict his messages.

## How the Victims View Themselves

**Identity Crisis.** The victim of spousal assault is unsure of her own ego needs. What this means is that she is unsure of who she is. When she talks about herself she will probably define herself in terms of her marital relationship or her family. She will talk about being a mother, a wife. She will talk about picking up her children from school. When asked questions like, "What do you do to take care of yourself?" she may go blank, not knowing how to respond.

**Loss of Boundaries and Assessment Skills.** There is a gradual loss of the abused women's own personal boundaries, and, often, her children's boundaries as well. She becomes unable to assess danger accurately. Although she may be seriously injured as a result of a beating, she is unable to recognize or face the fact that she is involved in a potentially lethal situation, one that may also be dangerous for her children. Some women are willing to acknowledge the danger of the situation only after abuse is directed toward their children. They may take steps at this point to be sure that the abuse does not continue.

We have been told by people who work in emergency rooms that people who have been battered show up only when there's blood. The sight of blood makes them realize the danger of the situation. If there are broken bones or internal injuries, these people often won't go to the hospital. Because they have lost touch with their physical boundaries, they may have lost touch with the feeling of pain.

**Chronic Patterns.** Human beings can get used to chronic abuse and battering is a chronic pattern. The women in the "Battered Women" film talk about. "This is my lot in life. This is the way that it is." Something amazing or incredible has to happen to jar a person out of thinking that the abuse is not a way of life that she has to accept.

The last issue I want to mention is the "generational view" which is part of the same chronic pattern. If women see their fathers beat their mothers, if they complain to others about being abused and are told, "That's too bad but that's the way it is," or if they tell others and are met with silence, they begin to accept violence as normal in families.

## Victims of Spouse Abuse: Counseling Concerns

**Take the Situation Seriously.** First and foremost, whatever your role is in relation to the person who seeks you out for help, take that person seriously. **NO violence should be minimized.** Both people — the person who is the victim and the person who abuses will minimize the extent of the violence.

**Ask Questions.** If victims of abuse come to you and say, "Things aren't quite right in my relationship. My spouse got angry, more angry than usual," and she is upset (whether or not she has bruises), find out what happened. Ask questions about what each of them does when they get angry. "How often do they get angry? What happens then? Have you ever been hit by him? Have you ever hit him?" If you at least ask questions to show that you take this seriously, it will probably be more than anyone else has done.

People may say, "This has never happened to me before, and it won't happen again!" Make the point that once the violence starts it doesn't stop. The violence will continue; it will probably increase, both in frequency and in intensity. This time the victim of abuse has bruises; who knows what will happen next time.

**The Legacy of Family Violence.** Explain the generational cycle of violence. Ask victims of abuse to consider what they are passing on to their children. Adults may decide that they are going to tolerate the violence and keep the family together. Inquire if this is really what they want to do because the legacy of violence is passed on. "Is this what you want for your children?"

**Assessment.** Assessing the danger of the situation can be difficult. Ask several questions:

(1) *What does that person see as the most important problem at this point in time?* She may be sitting in your office or on your doorstep at midnight because she's been beaten and is afraid to go home. However, the most important problem she sees at that time is how she's going to pay the rent if she leaves the person who abuses her.

(2) *Is she in jeopardy by seeing you?* She may be in danger if she tells her spouse she started seeing someone for counseling.

(3) *Does she have a network of support?* Help her identify it.

(4) *Does she have a place to stay?* A woman called the Center. Her husband had sexually abused her daughter and the mother and children were leaving home. The mother called because she didn't know where to go. We asked if she could stay with family, her mother, his family? No, she couldn't think of any

relative she could visit. We agreed to try to find her space in a shelter or safe home. She called back ten minutes later to say, "I've got it; I'm going to my ex-mother-in-law's."

**Be Clear and Specific.** Be clear with people when you feel the situation is lethal. Explain what you know about the battering cycle briefly. Express concern for what victims of abuse want to do: leave temporarily; remain in the situation and try to work things out; leave permanently, etc.

At the time the victim first sees you, maybe all she's willing to do is to make a plan for the future. Take time with her to make a plan: extra car keys, extra clothes at a neighbor's, step-by-step details on how she and the children would leave.

**Time Away Helps.** She may want to leave temporarily. We strongly encourage a physical **time out** — time when the couple is separated from each other and both can do some thinking. If she's in crisis and never knows when the violence will begin again, her problem-solving skills are not good and she has not had time to do some clear thinking.

**Image Building is Important.** Helping people who are in violent families can be frustrating. Helpers will find themselves saying the same things many times. Know that every time you take time to explain and work on the problem you help to build up people a little more. We who are helping and counseling may not get the results we want at that time, but we help people build up themselves so that they will be able to take some steps farther down the road.

**Probe.** If you suspect abuse and people don't come right out and tell you about it, ask questions:

(1) *How do you deal with anger in your relationship? Be specific.*

(2) *How did your parents deal with anger?*

(3) *How did/do you deal with anger with your sisters and brothers?*

If a couple is preparing for marriage, ask the woman: *What will you do the first time he hits you?* Not **if, when.**

To the man: *What will you do the first time she hits you?*

It may be jarring for couples to have questions like these asked of them. But it is very helpful for them to hear each other say, "I won't tolerate abuse" or "I might stay following one incident but I'd never stay after that." A couple going into an intimate relationship needs to clarify with each other their feelings about anger, violence, and how they want to resolve conflicts.

If the couple is already married, ask: *Has your partner ever hit you? If yes, when was the last time? What did you do when your partner hit you?*

## Follow-Up — The Future

Finally, it is in the follow-up, after the couple has started to deal with stopping the violence and the issue of whether or not they will remain together, that we start talking about the future of the victim of abuse and her partner and issues like self-esteem and independence. But first, **the violence has to stop.**

# The Incest Offender

Today we are focusing on the offender who sexually abuses children within the family. I will present some information on child molesters in general, with specific attention to the incest offender. I will then discuss issues that arise following disclosure of the abuse and suggest treatment approaches.

In his book, *Men Who Rape*, Nicholas Groth discusses the myths and realities of men who sexually abuse children. Included in his statements are the following facts:

- 71% of the men who sexually abuse children are under the age of 35.
- Most child molesters are of average intelligence and are not psychotic.
- The majority of molesters are known to their victims (The statistics vary: 70-85%).
- There does not seem to be any particular correlation between the use of alcohol and the abusive behavior.

These statements debunk the stereotype of the child molester as a crazy, retarded, alcoholic, dirty old man.

## Patterns of Offense

Groth identifies two basic patterns of offense. The first type of offenders (49%) respond exclusively to children — girls, boys, or both — and show no interest in adults for sexual gratification. These offenders Groth refers to as "pedophiles." Regardless of other sexual experiences, some of which may include sexual activity with adult peers, these offenders are primarily sexually attracted to children. These men are comfortable with their experiences with children and have little or no remorse about the contacts. They avoid sexual relations with adults out of fear of being rejected.

The second type of offenders (51%) regress to sexual encounters with children as the result of conflicts or problems in their adult relationships. Incest offenders are in this category. These offenders fail to cope with life stresses and impulsively offend against children when crises arise in their lives. Although they offend against children, these men are predominantly sexually oriented toward adults and the majority of them are married. When they offend they will suspend their usual value system (which condemns sexual abuse of children) or rationalize that what they are doing is all right. However, they are distressed by the abusive behavior and experience guilt, shame and remorse after an incident. Eighty-three percent of these men lead exclusively heterosexual lives and the remaining 17% are bisexual, although their preference is still for women. "It appears, then, that the heterosexual adult constitutes more of a threat of sexual victimization to the underage child than does the homosexual adult."[1]

## Profile of the Incest Offender

The incest offender is usually a male (98%) who is insecure and socially immature. He does not have social skills for relating to adults, particularly in intimate situations. Some of the offenders **appear** to be comfortable with their peers in social settings. Nonetheless, they are unskilled at satisfying their affection and attention needs through adults.

Most incest offenders are in a heterosexual relationship with another adult, married or in an ongoing relationship. The men report that they have access to sex with their adult female partners. Nevertheless, most of the incest offenders are ignorant about sexuality. What they do know they have learned from their peers, films, magazines, pornography — sources which have given them a distorted view of sexuality and its importance. It is not surprising, then, that these men have never learned how to interact in a mutually satisfying relationship with an adult and that these relationships do not satisfy their needs for being accepted.

Generally these men have rigid beliefs and authoritarian manners. They want to be head of the household, in control. They may justify their abusive behavior by saying, "This is **my** family; they do what **I** say." When the offenders fear that the secret of the abuse may become public, they become more authoritarian and controlling. For example, a teen-age daughter who has been abused since the age of eight decides that she wants to have more contact with a group of friends and go places with them. Her father may respond by not letting her date or even leave the house to minimize her opportunities to reveal the abuse.

Incest offenders have very rigid moral codes, particularly regarding sexual behavior. Many of them would never go outside the family to have an affair with another adult, or go to a prostitute. They do not view their incestuous behavior as 'immoral' or unacceptable because it occurs **within the family**.

## Offenders' Relationship to Children

The offenders use variations of two methods to gain sexual access to children. The first method used to pressure children for sexual activity is through enticement,

[1] Groth, N.A. *Men Who Rape*. Plenum Press. New York. 1979. p. 148

encouragement or instruction. For example, "I'm going to teach you a special game that will be our secret," or, "Feel my penis. It is all right to touch it; it makes me feel good," or, "If you let me just lie here a while I'll buy you something nice." The offender explains that what is important to him about the sexual relationship is that he feels special to the child; he wants the child to love and appreciate him.

The second method used to gain sexual access to children is through force, including threats, intimidation, or physical duress. These situations are comparable to rape in which sexuality is an expression of power and anger.[2] For example, an offender may tell a child to do what he says or he will beat the child, or throw the child out of the home.

Threats are also used to buy the child's silence if pressure does not work. For example, "Don't tell anyone because you won't be believed and you will have to go to a foster home for lying," or, "If you tell, our family will be split up and it will be all your fault."

Incest offenders project their needs onto the children they abuse. They may fantasize that a child is lonely and needs companionship; in fact, the abuser needs companionship and attention. The offenders will tell themselves that they are trying to satisfy the child's needs when it is their own needs they are trying to meet.

These men have high expectations for themselves and see themselves as always failling short of these expectations. Whereas they perceive adults as being very demanding, they see children as not demanding, especially about sexual performance. Hence, they feel more relaxed with children.

They want the abuse to remain a secret and they know that they are likely to get away with their abusive behavior keeping it within the family.

Incest offenders betray their responsibility as caretakers, as adults who have responsibility for the welfare of children. They take advantage of children's vulnerability. They may rationalize their behavior by saying they are "teaching" the child about life and sex. They are, in fact, abusing the child.

## Following Disclosure of the Abuse

Denial is usually an incest offender's first reaction to disclosure of the abuse. When confronted, the offender may respond, "That never happened," "The child is lying; you know we always have trouble with her/him," or "I say it did not happen. Who are you going to believe, me or this child?"

An incest offender may attempt to rationalize his behavior by blaming the child for the sexual contact. For example, "He came up to me and started rubbing against me" to describe why sexual activity occurred with a five-year-old boy. "She was seductive and kept walking around in her nightgown," blaming the child for the subsequent abuse.

Sometimes an offender will acknowledge that something happened, but will minimize the situation. For example, "The child saw me getting in the shower, that is all that happened." The reality of the situation is that the offender molested a young boy in the shower.

Another way the offender may minimize the seriousness of the abuse is to say, "It was not serious. It only happened once and will never happen again." In fact, the abuse probably happened more than once; without treatment the offender will probably abuse again.

Some incest offenders admit what happened and say they are sorry for the abuse. They may want to pray about it and ask to be forgiven. They say the abuse will never happen again. These offenders may be very sincere about wanting to be forgiven and about their intentions to not abuse again. However, child molestation is compulsive behavior that is usually repeated unless the offenders undergo treatment. We believe offenders need to hear the message that **they need treatment to help them stop molesting children.** We also believe in the power of prayer as a support during this period and encourage clergy and congregations to be supportive of offenders as they go through the treatment process.

## Treatment Approaches

In the past when sex offenders were convicted they were sent to prison for their crimes. Treatment programs are now offered in different parts of the U.S. for sex offenders as an alternative to imprisonment. Sex offenders rarely seek treatment voluntarily, or complete the treatment if they do seek help on their own. Criminal prosecution may be used as leverage to insure that offenders receive treatment to stop their abusive behavior.

Below are two approaches to treatment of incest offenders:

One approach is to remove the offender from the home following disclosure of the abuse. This protects the child from further abuse and emphasizes that the offender is at fault and must take responsibility for the abuse. Treatment is then provided for the victim, the non-offending parent, and the offender. The offender has the option of returning home only when all parties involved in treatment of the offender agree that he is

[2] Ibid., pp. 142-3.

ready to do so and only if the child victim agrees to it. Alternatively, when the offender does not want to leave the family and other family members support his decision to remain in the home, the victim is removed to a foster home for protection. The child is returned home when the treatment providers believe that she/he will be safe there.

The second approach is to keep the father and mother together in the home and to remove the victimized child when the abuse is disclosed. Many who use this approach believe that removing the child from the home eliminates pressure from the family on the victim to change her/his story and makes a statement to other family members that the incest has occurred and is a serious problem.

Both approaches use the leverage of criminal prosecution to pressure the offender into treatment.

# Family Violence Directed Against Children

When we refer to children as the victims of family violence we have to think the unthinkable, that children are physically, emotionally, and sexually abused by their caretakers. In 1962 Henry Kempe and his associates identified the "battered child syndrome" and made the problem of physical battering visible. Since that time service providers and researchers have recognized that the problem is greater than just physical battering. Today all states have laws requiring professionals and other people working with children to report cases of child abuse to state authorities.

The following is an overview of the definition of family violence as it relates to children. There are four categories of violence: physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, destruction of property and pets.

There has been little attention paid to the problem of child abuse and neglect until very recently. As a result, we do not have reliable statistics. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates that one million children are abused each year. Of these, 2,000 children die each year as a direct result of child abuse. **Physical abuse** of children includes non-accidental infliction of injury or physical harm to a child's body as well as failure to provide a child's needs for food, care, clothing, shelter or medical attention.

**Psychological abuse** usually accompanies physical abuse and may involve emotional neglect. When parents or caretakers act cold or rejecting toward a child or withhold love from a child, they are abusing their child psychologically. (Adults, by definition, are not dependent and therefore cannot **legally** be neglected.)

The third category is the **destruction of property and pets.** Thus far our experience has been that this type of abuse is usually inflicted on children by their siblings. When we talk about family violence with adolescents and younger children we ask them how they respond when they get angry with a family member. Frequently, they express their anger by "accidentally" destroying an object or pet. These children know that they will probably not be punished if the damage is inflicted by accident. For example, a teen-ager told me her weekly chore was to dust. When she was upset with her sister she would break one of her sister's belongings while dusting her room. Like most young people, this teenager knew that if she broke something on purpose or hit her sister she would get into trouble. Although the destruction of objects or pets may be made to look like an accident, it is still violence directed at a particular person. We do not teach children that feeling anger is acceptable, nor do we teach them appropriate ways to express their anger, especially within the family.

**Sexual abuse** of children is the fourth category of violence and the one we will be focusing on today. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates that there are between 60,000 and 100,000 cases of child sexual abuse per year.

## Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is "The sexual exploitation of a child who is not developmentally capable of understanding or resisting the contact or who may be psychologically and socially dependent upon the offender."[1]

Most of us want to believe that **all** children are loved, nurtured, and safe within their families. Unfortunately, we know that is not true.

Statistics indicate that 1 in 5 female children and 1 in 11 male children will be sexually molested by the age of 18.[2] Approximately half of the sexual abuse of children is due to incest.[3] Adolescents who run away from home cite sexual abuse at home as one of the top three reasons for leaving. Many of these young people are then raped by others while they are on the run or are coerced into prostitution. Most studies show that children are vulnerable to sexual abuse at all ages. However, child sexual abuse usually begins in the pre-adolescent years, ages 6-12.

Incest is sexual relations between members of the same family who are not married to each other. Incestuous assault is the sexual abuse of a child by members of the child's family. The sexual abuse may include fondling, sexual intercourse, or any act designed to sexually stimulate the child or to use the child for another's sexual stimulation. "Family members" includes parents, parent-figures (e.g., foster parents, mother's boyfriends), siblings, cousins, grandparents, others.

## Myths and Facts

There is a myth that most of the sexual abuse of children is committed by homosexual

[1] Sexual Assault Center, Harborview Medical Center, "Sexual Abuse of Children," Seattle, Washington, May 1977

[2] Finklehor, David. *Sexually Victimized Children*, The Free Press, New York, 1979

[3] Sexual Assault Center, Harborview Medical Center, caseload statistics for 1979, children 16 years of age and under



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men who molest boys. In fact, the majority of the victims are female and 98% of the offenders are male.

It is also a myth that children enjoy, provoke, or are partially responsible for sexual contact with adults. Children enjoy attention from adults and may seek out affection; they are not looking for sexual activity. Children need to be touched, hugged, praised. As adults, we can give children physical attention (e.g., hugging, games, wrestling) without molesting them. As adults, we may have perfectly normal sexual feelings for children; we must not act out these feelings. It is a crime for adults to have sexual relations with children — and adults, not children, must be held responsible for this abusive behavior.

Another myth is that most of the sexual abuse of children is committed by strangers. In 85% of the cases the abuser is someone the child knows; in nearly half of the cases the abuser is a relative and most often is a father or father-figure to the child.[4] We teach children not to take candy from strangers or get into cars with strangers. These precautions against strangers are directed at only 15% of the sexual abuse of children. We must prepare children for what to do if someone they know, friend or relative, tries to molest them.

Finally, that non-violent sexual abuse is not emotionally traumatic, is another myth. Overt violence is rarely used by a child molester, so most of the sexual abuse of children might be labeled "non-violent." The offender usually starts by befriending the child, giving the child special attention and gifts. The physical contact also begins gradually and proceeds to fondling and finally genital contact. Intercourse may or may not occur. The offender tells the child that the sexual contact is their "secret" and that the child must not tell anyone. Although the abuse may be non-violent, it is impossible for children to give adquate, informed consent and their reactions to incest range from anxious, confused and/or overstimulated, to frankly fearful and overwhelmed. These reactions continue into adult life and may cause trauma for the victim of the abuse in several areas including intimacy, trust of authority, and peer relationships.

## Counseling Concerns — Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

**Believe the Child.** First and most important, if a child says anything about being sexually abused, believe the child. Many children never tell anyone about the abuse because they fear they will not be believed. Children are not taught how to express things that are bothering them, and they may not have the words to talk about what has happened to them. So children may tell their stories in ways that seem strange to adults. For example:

> A six-year-old boy was outside playing on his tricycle when his sister arrived home with a new friend. The little boy had never seen this friend before but he walked right up to her and said, "George down the street plays with dicks." His 14-year-old sister almost strangled him on the spot. The boy ran in the house and hid in a closet. When his mother found him he was crying and he said, "It's really true, Mom."

The child was saying that George had sexually assaulted him. He chose to tell a stranger so that if he was rejected he would not hurt as badly. It was much easier for the young boy to tell a stranger than to tell someone close to him for fear he would not be believed.

Believing the child is also important because children need to know that they will be protected from further abuse. We can say, "I believe you. I am glad you told me about this. I will make sure that person does not harm you again."

**Isolation.** Children who are victims of incest are isolated from their peers and from other family members. They often talk about feeling "older" than their peers because they know about and have been involved in sex. They are restricted from talking about the sexual abuse with anyone because the offender told them that what they are doing is a "secret." The "secret" is a burden that the children believe they must keep to themselves. Depending on the duration of this "secret," the children may move through childhood without developing peer relationships.

**Trust/Authority.** Parents have responsibility for children. Parents betray their responsibility and authority for children when they abuse them. The abuse teaches children that they have no rights, especially the right to say "no" to abuse, and that someone else has control over their bodies. The abused children may decide that parents and other adults cannot be trusted.

**Affection.** Ideally children give and receive affection through hugs, wrestling, talking, laughing. Children who are victims of sexual abuse learn that sexual contact often accompanies or supplants affection.

**Low Self-Esteem.** Many children who are abused talk about feeling worthless. The sexual abuse destroyed any good feelings they had about themselves. In addition, the offender

[4] Sexual Assault Center, Harborview Medical Center, caseload statistics for 1979, children 17 years of age and under.

may tell them they are worthless but that the sexual activity will make them worth something, because they will be making someone (the offender) happy.

## Disclosure — Child Victims of Sexual Abuse

There are behaviors that may be indicators of abuse, particularly sexual abuse. These include loss of appetite, children regressing to behaviors that are appropriate for a much younger child (e.g., thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, excessive fearfulness). An overt indicator of sexual abuse is a child telling someone about her or his being abused.

Children and young people often have difficulty talking about the abuse. Adopt a straight-forward attitude to the child's disclosure of the abuse. Tell the child you believe her/him and you know what happened was not the child's fault. You are glad that she/he is telling you about what happened and you will work to ensure that the abuse ends. A child may not understand all that happened to her/him as is illustrated by the following example:

> A police officer interviewing a ten-year-old girl asked the girl if her father had ejaculated. The child had no idea what the officer was talking about. The officer asked if her father had climaxed; the child remained silent. Then he asked her, "When you stood up afterwards did you feel wet between your legs?" She said, "Oh yes, it grossed me out."

When the secret of the abuse is made known, service providers must immediately contact other members of the family and try to work with them. If nothing is done immediately following the disclosure, the families frequently pressure the children to change their stories and not talk about the abuse.

Following the disclosure of the abuse the children have a variety of reactions and feelings. They may feel guilty — especially if the family tells them that the family is ruined, that the offender will go to jail, or that they are lying and have created trouble for the family. The victims will probably feel ambivalent about having told anyone about the abuse. They want the abuse to end, but may not want to be separated from the offender who may be their father or relative, or have offered the children special attention. Those around the children may assume that the children are glad to be away from the abuser and may not realize that, along with relief, the abused children may also experience grief.

Crisis-intervention counseling is an effective intervention for sexually abused children and their families.[5] Long-term counseling is essential for the offenders. The victims may need long-term counseling, as well, especially if the abuse was committed by their father or if a lot of force was used by the offender.[6]

## Adults Who Were Victims of Incest as Children — Counseling Concerns

**Unfinished Business.** Adults who were victims of incest as children often experience a sense of "unfinished business" about the abuse. This may be demonstrated in a number of ways. Perhaps when they were abused they told someone and were not believed. As adults, they may need to tell their story to others who will respond to it with credibility.

Often the adults want to confront the offenders, particularly if the offenders were not confronted at the time of the abuse. The adult victims want the offenders to take full responsibility for the abuse and to relieve the victims of any feelings of guilt, ambivalence or confusion.

Acknowledge the victim's sense of unfinished business and help her/him identify options for resolving the feelings. One option victims can exercise is to express their feelings in a letter to the person who abused them, demanding that the offender take responsibility for his/her actions. Later, they can decide whether or not to mail the letter; writing down all of the thoughts and feelings may be sufficient. If the victims choose to mail their letters to the offenders, they must be realistic about the possible results. On the one hand, an offender may admit to and take full responsibility for the abuse; on the other hand, another offender may deny that the abuse ever happened and disassociate the victim from the family.

**Isolation/Depression.** Adults who were victims of incest may feel like they are the only people in the world to whom sexual abuse has occurred. Talking to others who have been through the same experience helps to break the feelings of isolation. Some of the victims are very depressed and contemplate suicide. They regard suicide as the only way to end their pain and alienation. Again, talking and sharing feelings with someone who has also been a victim of incest provides a sense of validation by others who know what the victims are going through and helps to mediate the victims' suffering.

**Anger.** Adults who were incest victims as children may experience anger, especially if the one who assaulted them has never been confronted with the abuse. The anger may be

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[5] Berliner, L. "Child Sexual Abuse: What Happens Next?" *Victimology: An International Journal*, 2:327-331, Summer 1977.

[6] Finklehor, D. Sexually Victimized Children. The Free Press, New York, 1979.

directed at the offender, at themselves, or at others. When the anger is directed at themselves they ask, "Why did I let the abuse continue for so long? Why didn't I tell someone?" The anger may be directed at others, particularly at their mothers: "Why didn't she stop the abuse?" Many of the victims assume that their mothers knew about the abuse and just let it continue, even though their mothers may not have even suspected that the abuse was occurring. Help the victims to direct their feelings of anger at the appropriate person: the person who sexually abused them.

**Sexuality.** Incest can have a negative, even destructive, impact on a victim's expression of her/his sexuality. Some victims report not being able to stand sexual contact or touch that reminds them of the abuse. Others talk about separating their emotions from their body, "going into a wall" and not feeling what happens during sex; this was the technique they used to disassociate from the abuse when it was happening. Some victims have no trouble with sexual relations but will comment that they will never let anyone get close to them emotionally. Sexual abuse victims may need help to distinguish between sexual abuse and mutual sexuality in order to begin viewing their own sexuality in a positive way.

**Fears.** As adults, victims of incest may continue to fear their offenders. They may fear for other young people who are around the offender and try to intervene in their behalf. For example:

> A woman who was sexually assaulted by her father is now concerned for her nieces who live near her father. This woman wrote to her sister, telling her for the first time about the abuse she had suffered, and warning her sister to be careful to watch out for the nieces. Her sister wrote back and said, "Why are you telling these lies about Dad?"

Although this woman's sister did not believe her, the woman hopes that her sister will at least be a bit cautious when the nieces are around their grandfather.

Victims of child abuse who have not thought about the abuse in a long time may find themselves feeling fearful or having nightmares when their own children reach the age that the victims were when they were first abused. The victims may decide to seek help for themselves at this point, to finish any unresolved feelings in order to deal with their fears for their children.

# Non-Offending Parents of Children Who are Victims of Incest

When sexual abuse occurs within families there is a myth that all family members collude to allow the abuse to happen. This myth is particularly aimed at mothers when fathers or father-figures are the abusers. Many of the mothers **do not know** about the incest. Many of them cannot conceive of the fact that their spouses are abusing their children. Once the abuse is disclosed, some mothers will believe the offender's claim that the abuse did not occur, despite the child's report to the contrary.

On the other hand, some mothers will say, "So that's why the children didn't want me to go to bingo Wednesday nights," or "That's why the children wanted a babysitter and didn't want to be left with their uncle." In retrospect, the mothers realize that the children were trying to tell them something but didn't understand the message the children were trying to convey to them.

## Who to Blame?

When non-offending parents learn about the abuse, they often feel a need to discharge the blame on someone. Frequently, they find it especially difficult and painful to blame the offending parent because of their emotional investment in the relationship with their spouse. Instead, other family members become scapegoats for the abuse. Non-offending parents may even blame themselves.

Mothers may feel competitive with their abused children, particularly if the victims are young women. The mothers may feel that their own inadequacies prompted their mates to turn to their daughters. Some mothers of incest victims will state that the sexual life in the marriage was good, so they cannot understand why their husbands wanted sex with the children.

The non-offending parent may blame the abuse on the children, claiming that the children provoked or went along with the sexual activity. The children may also be blamed for the upheaval in the family which follows disclosure of the incest.

All of this blame is misdirected, however. It is the offending parent who must assume responsibility and blame for abusing other members of the family.

## Support

The non-offending parents need personal contacts with their congregations, ministers, priests or rabbis, friends, families, counselors. They need our support to act in the best interests of the child and protect the child from further abuse, and they need help to deal with their own feelings toward the offender while he is in treatment. In some cases, non-offending parents are forced to take sides, to choose between their spouse and their child. We can help them to make healthy choices by listening, by talking, by expressing our concern for their well-being and that of the victims and offender.

## Divorce

Most wives of male incest offenders consider separation and/or divorce, either immediately upon disclosure of the abuse, or later. The question to separate/divorce raises a number of issues for a woman — religious sanctions against divorce, her emotional and/or economic attachments to her husband, the best interests of her children.

Sometimes, her congregation, family or friends will pressure a wife of an incest offender to remain in the marriage while her husband is in treatment. She may still opt for divorce at a later point.

## Relation to the Child

Finally, after many of the non-offending parents learn about the abuse, they feel unclear about how to act toward their children. Should they overprotect the children and monitor where the children are every minute to prevent further abuse? Should they continue to ask their children about the abuse so they know how the children feel?

We suggest that the non-offending parent and the abused children talk about the incident once. Then, if the children want to discuss the abuse again, the children initiate the discussion. Children who have been incest victims need assurance that the abuse will not happen again, but they do not need to re-hash the story a number of times, nor do they need overprotection that restricts them. Parents can tell their children, "I love you, I will protect you," and then give them the freedom/lattitude their children need to grow and become independent persons.

In closing, I want to re-emphasize to you that non-offending parents need our support. The non-offending parent feels victimized by the incest and in many cases they are the primary source of emotional and economic support for the abused child. Our understanding and caring will help them as they work to take care of the child.



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# A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence *was written by Rev. Marie M. Fortune, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and Director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Substantial contributions were made by Judith Hertz from the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.*

## The Importance of Religious Issues: Roadblocks or Resources?

The crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed, both for victims and for those in the family who abuse them. Approached from either a secular or religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded. This reflects a serious lack of understanding of the nature of family violence and its impact on people's lives. Treatment of families experiencing violence and abuse requires integrating the needs of the whole person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and co-operation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Occasionally, a social worker, psychotherapist, or other secular service provider will wonder, "why bother with religious concerns at all?" The answer is a very practical one: religious issues or concerns which surface for people in the midst of crisis are **primary issues.** If not addressed in some way, at some point, they will inevitably become roadblocks to the client's efforts to resolve the crisis and move on with her/his life. In addition, a person's religious beliefs and community of faith (church or synagogue) **can** provide a primary support system for an individual and her/his family in the midst of an experience of family violence.

For a pastor, priest, rabbi, lay counselor or other person approaching family violence from a religious perspective, there is little question about the relevance of religious concerns: these are primary for any religious person. Rather, they may doubt the importance of dealing with concerns for shelter, safety, intervention and treatment. "These people just need to get right with God and everything will be fine." This perspective overlooks the fact that these other issues are practical and important as well. Family violence is complex and potentially lethal; these seemingly mundane concerns represent immediate and critical needs.

When confronted with a personal experience of family violence, like any other crisis whether chronic or sudden, most people also experience a crisis of meaning in their lives. Very basic life questions arise and are usually expressed in religious and/or philosophical terms. Questions like, "Why is this happening to me and my family?" or "Why did God **let** this happen?" or "What meaning does this have for my life?" are all indications of people's efforts to understand, to make sense out of experiences of suffering and to place the experiences in a context of meaning for their lives. These questions are to be seen as a healthy sign because they represent an effort to comprehend and contextualize the experience of family violence and thereby regain some control over their lives in the midst of crisis.

Thus for many individuals and families in crisis, the questions of meaning will be expressed in religious terms, and more specifically, in terms of the Jewish or Christian traditions, since the vast majority of people in the U.S. today grew up with some association with these traditions. Many continue as adults to be involved with a church or synagogue. In addition, Jewish and Christian values overlap with cultural values of the majority American culture, so most Americans carry a set of cultural values, consciously or unconsciously, which are primarily Jewish or Christian in nature.[1]

Religious concerns can become roadblocks **or** resources for those dealing with experiences of family violence because these concerns are central to many people's lives. The outcome depends on **how** they are handled.

The misinterpretation and misuse of the Jewish and Christian traditions have often had a detrimental effect on families, particularly those dealing with family violence. Misinterpretation of the traditions can contribute substantially to the guilt, self-blame, and suffering which victims experience and to the rationalizations often used by those who abuse. "But the Bible says . . ." is frequently used to explain, excuse, or justify abuse between family members. This need not be the case. Re-examining and analyzing those Biblical references which have been misused

[1] The discussion of religious issues included here reflects a Jewish and Christian perspective due to the background and experience of the authors and contributors. Although there are other religious traditions also present in the pluralistic American culture, the focus of this discussion is limited by the authors' perspectives and experiences.



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can lead to reclaiming the traditions in a way which supports victims **and** those who abuse while clearly confronting and challenging abuse in the family.

A careful study of both Jewish and Christian scriptures makes it very clear that **it is not possible to use scripture to justify abuse of persons in the family.** However, it is also clear that it **is** possible to **misuse** scripture and other traditional religious literature for this purpose. This is a frequent practice (see below). Attempting to teach that there are very simple answers to the very complex issues which people face in their lives is another potential roadblock within contemporary teachings of some Jewish or Christian groups. Thus, religious groups have often not adequately prepared people for the traumas which they will face at some point in their lives: illness, death, abuse, divorce, and so forth.

> "Keep the commandments and everything will be fine."
> "Keep praying."
> "Just accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you will be healthy, prosperous, popular, and happy."
> "Go to services each week."
> "Pray harder."

While these teachings may be fundamental teachings of religious faith, alone they are inadequate to deal with the complexity of most experiences of human suffering like family violence. When offered as simple and complete answers to life's questions, they create in the hearer an illusion of simplicity which leaves the hearer vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed by an experience of suffering. In addition, the teachings set up a dynamic which blames the victims for their suffering.

> "If you are a **good** Christian or a **good** Jew, God will treat you kindly, or take care of you, or make you prosper as a reward for your goodness."
> "If you suffer, it is a sign that you **must not be** a good Christian or a good Jew and God is displeased with you."

If one accepts this simple formula (which makes a theological assumption that God's love is conditional), then when one experiences any form of suffering, one feels punished or abandoned by God. The simple answer alone cannot hold up in the face of personal or familial suffering. When people attempt to utilize the simple answer and it is insufficient, they feel that their faith has failed them or that God has abandoned them. In fact, it may be the teachings or actions of their particular congregation or denomination which have been inadequate to their needs. Thus they may be feeling abandoned.

The religious teachings of the Jewish and Christian traditions **are** adequate to address the experiences of contemporary persons when the traditions acknowledge the complexity, the paradox, and sometimes the incomprehensible nature of those experiences. The most important resource which the church or synagogue can provide is to be available to support those who are suffering, to be a sign of God's presence, and to be willing to struggle with the questions which the experiences may raise. Offering sweet words of advice to "solve" life's problems reduces the experience of the one who suffers to a mere slogan and denies the depth of the pain **and** the potential for healing and new life.

### Cooperative Roles for Secular Counselor and Minister/Rabbi

Both the secular counselor and the minister or rabbi have important roles to play in response to family violence. Families in which there is abuse need the support and expertise of both in times of crisis. Sometimes the efforts of the two will come into conflict, as illustrated by the following situation:

> We received a call at the Center from a local shelter for abused women. The shelter worker indicated that she had a badly beaten woman there whose minister had told her to go back home to her husband. The worker asked us to call the minister and "straighten him out." Ten minutes later we received a call from the minister. He said that the shelter had one of his parishioners there and the shelter worker had told her to get a divorce. He asked us to call the shelter and "straighten them out."

In the above case, both the shelter worker and the minister had the best interests of the victim in mind. Yet they were clearly at odds with each other because they did not understand the other's concerns which related to the needs of the victim. The shelter worker did not understand the minister's concern for maintaining the family and the minister did not understand that the woman's life was in danger. We arranged for the minister and the shelter worker to talk directly with each other, sharing their concerns in order to seek a solution in the best interest of the victim. This was accomplished successfully.

The need for cooperation and communication between counselors and ministers or rabbis is clear so that the needs of parishioners/congregants/clients are best served and the resources of both religious and secular helpers are utilized effectively.

**Role of the Secular Counselor.** In the secular setting, a social worker or mental

health provider may encounter a victim or abuser who raises religious questions or concerns. When this occurs, the following guidelines are helpful:

1. Pay attention to religious questions/ comments/references.

2. Affirm these concerns as appropriate and check out their importance for the client.

3. Having identified and affirmed this area of concern, **if you are uncomfortable with it yourself or feel unqualified to pursue it,** refer to a pastor/priest/rabbi who is trained to help and whom you know and trust.

4. If you are comfortable and would like to pursue the concern, do so, emphasizing the ways in which the client's religious tradition can be a resource to her/him and can in no way be used to justify or allow abuse or violence to continue in the family. (See below.)

**Role of Clergy.** The minister/rabbi can most effectively help family abuse victims and offenders by co-operating with secular resources. Combined, these provide a balanced approach which deals with specific external, physical, and emotional needs while addressing the larger religious and philosophical issues.

When approached about family violence, the minister/rabbi can use the following guidelines:

1. Be aware of the dynamics of family violence and utilize this understanding in evaluating the situation.

2. Use your expertise as a religious authority and spiritual leader to illuminate the positive value of religious traditions while clarifying that they do not justify or condone family abuse. (See below).

3. Identify the parishioner/congregant's immediate needs and REFER to a secular resource (if available) to deal with the specifics of abuse, intervention and treatment.

4. If you are comfortable pursuing the matter, provide additional pastoral support and encouragement to help families dealing with violence to take full advantage of available resources.

## Scriptural and Theological Issues

**Suffering.** The experience of physical or psychological pain or deprivation can generally be referred to as "suffering." When a person experiences suffering, often the first question is, "Why am I suffering?" This is really two questions: "Why is there suffering?" and "Why me?" These are classical theological questions to which there are no totally satisfactory answers.

Sometimes a person will answer these questions in terms of very specific cause-and-effect relationships:

> "I am being abused by my husband as punishment from God for the fact that 20 years ago, when I was 17 years old, I had sexual relations with a guy I wasn't married to."

In this case, the victim of abuse sees her suffering as just punishment for an event which happened long ago and for which she has since felt guilty. This explanation has an almost superstitious quality. It reflects an effort on the part of the woman to make sense out of her experience of abuse by her husband. Her explanation takes the "effect" (the abuse), looks for a probable "cause" (her teenage "sin"), and directly connects the two. This conclusion is based on a set of theological assumptions which support her view: God is a stern judge who seeks retribution for her sins and God causes suffering to be inflicted on her as punishment.

Unfortunately, the woman's explanation neither focuses on the real nature of her suffering (i.e., the abuse by her husband), nor does it place responsibility for her suffering where it lies: on her abusive husband.

Sometimes, people try to explain suffering by saying that it is "God's will" or "part of God's plan for my life" or "God's way of teaching me a lesson." These explanations assume God to be stern, harsh, even cruel and arbitrary. This image of God runs counter to a Biblical image of a kind, merciful and loving God. The God of this Biblical teaching does not single out anyone to suffer for the sake of suffering, because suffering is not pleasing to God.

A distinction between voluntary and involuntary suffering is useful at this point. Someone may choose to suffer abuse or indignity in order to accomplish a greater good. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. suffered greatly in order to change what he believed to be unjust, racist laws. Although the abuse he experienced was not justifiable, he chose voluntary suffering as a means to an end.

Involuntary suffering which occurs when a person is beaten, raped, or abused, especially in a family relationship also cannot be justified but is never chosen. It may, on occasion, **be endured** by a victim for a number of reasons, including a belief that such endurance will eventually "change" the person who is being abusive. However, this belief is unrealistic and generally only reinforces the abuse.

Christian tradition teaches that suffering happens to people because there is evil and sinfulness in the world. Unfortunately, when someone behaves in a hurtful way, someone else usually bears the brunt of that act and suffers as a result. Striving to live a righteous life does not guarantee that one will be

protected from the sinfulness of another. A person may find that she/he suffers from having made a poor decision, (e.g. by marrying a spouse who is abusive). But this in no way means that the person either wants to suffer or deserves abuse from the spouse.

In Christian teaching, at no point does God promise that we will not suffer in this life. In scripture, God **does** promise to be present to us when we suffer. This is especially evident in the Psalms which give vivid testimony to people's experience of God's faithfulness in the midst of suffering (see Psalms 22 and 55).

One's fear of abandonment by God is often strong when experiencing suffering and abuse. This fear is usually experienced by victims of abuse who often feel they have been abandoned by almost everyone: friends, other family members, clergy, doctors, police, lawyers, counselors. Perhaps none of these believed the family members or were able to help. It is therefore very easy for victims to conclude that God has also abandoned them. For Christians, the promise to victims from God is that even though all others abandon them, God will be faithful. This is the message found in Romans:

> "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39, RSV).

Often this reassurance is very helpful to victims of violence or to those who abuse them.

Sometimes, people who regard suffering as God's will for them believe that God is teaching them a lesson and/or that hardship builds character. Experiences of suffering can, in fact, be occasions for growth. People who suffer may realize in retrospect that they learned a great deal from the experience and grew more mature as a result. This often is the case, but only if the person who is suffering also receives support and affirmation throughout the experience. With the support of family, friends, and helpers, people who are confronted with violence in their family can end the abuse, possibly leave the situation, make major changes in their lives, and grow as mature adults. They will probably learn some difficult lessons: increased self-reliance; how to express anger; that they may survive better outside than inside abusive relationships; that they can be a whole person without being married; that they can exercise control over their actions with others; that family relationships need not be abusive and violent.

However, this awareness of suffering as the occasion for growth **must come from those who are suffering** and at a time when they are well on their way to renewal. It is hardly appropriate when someone is feeling great pain to point out that things really are not so bad and that someday she/he will be glad that all of this happened. These words of "comfort and reassurance" are usually for the benefit of the minister/rabbi or counselor, not the parishioner/congregant or client. At a later time, it may be useful to point out the new growth which has taken place, and very simply to affirm the reality that this person **has survived** an extremely difficult situation. Suffering may present an occasion for growth; whether this potential is actualized depends on how the experience of suffering is managed.

**Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Jewish Perspective.** The Jewish marriage ceremony is known as "Kiddushin" or sanctification. Through it a couple's relationship is sanctified or set apart before God. This sanctification reminds Jews to strive to express their holiness through marriage and the home in a covenantal relationship which is based on mutual love and respect.

Judaism views marriage as necessary for fulfillment. Marriage is part of God's plan. The first time God speaks to Adam, God says that it is not fitting that Adam should be alone. "Shalom Bayit," peace in the home, is a major family value in Judaism. "Shalom," which is simply translated as "peace," also signifies wholeness, completeness, fulfillment. Peace in the home, domestic harmony, encompasses the good and welfare of all the home's inhabitants.

The rabbis consider domestic tranquility as one of the most important ideals because it is the essential forerunner to peace on earth. "Peace will remain a distant vision until we do the work of peace ourselves. If peace is to be brought into the world we must bring it first to our families and communities."[2]

The concept of Shalom Bayit should not be misinterpreted as encouraging the preservation of an abusive marriage. When domestic harmony is impossible because of physical abuse, the only way for peace may be dissolution of marriage. Although marriage is viewed as permanent, divorce has always been an option according to the Jewish tradition.

In Judaism conjugal rights are obligatory upon the husband who must be available for his wife.

> "A wife may restrict her husband in his business journey to nearby places only, so that he would not otherwise deprive

[2] *Gates of Repentance*. (High Holy Days Prayer Book). Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1978. p. 67.

her of her conjugal rights. Hence he may not set out without her permission."[3]

While the husband is responsible for his wife's sexual fulfillment, the wife, in return, is expected to have sexual relations with her husband. Maimonides[4] teaches us about the relationship between husband and wife in a Jewish marriage. He asserts that if the **wife** refuses sexual relations with her husband . . .

> "she should be questioned as to the reason . . . If she says, 'I have come to loathe him, and I cannot willingly submit to his intercourse,' he must be compelled to divorce her immediately for she is not like a captive woman who must submit to a man that is hateful to her."[5]

This suggests that no wife is expected to submit to sexual activity with a husband she fears or hates. The arena of sexual sharing for Jewish couples is one of mutual responsibility and choice.

**Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Christian Perspective.** Christian teaching about the model of the marriage relationship has traditionally focused heavily on Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Corinthians, and Colossians. Misinterpretations of or misplaced emphasis on these texts create substantial problems for many married couples. Most commonly, directives on marriage based on scripture are given to women and not to men, and state that wives must "submit" to their husbands. This often is interpreted to mean that the husband/father is the absolute head of the household and that the wife and children must obey him without question. Unfortunately, this idea has also been interpreted to mean that wives and children must submit to abuse from husbands and fathers. This rationalization is used by those who abuse, as well as by counselors, clergy, and the victims of the abuse themselves.

A closer look at the actual scriptural references reveals a different picture. For example, Ephesians 5. 21:

> "Be subject **to one another** out of reverence for Christ." (RSV, emphasis added)

This is the first and most important verse in the Ephesians passage on marriage and also the one most often overlooked. It clearly indicates that all Christians — husbands and wives — are to be **mutually subject** to one another. The word which is translated "be subject to" can more appropriately be translated "defer" or "accommodate" to.

> "Wives **accommodate** to your husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5.22)

This teaching implies sensitivity, flexibility, and responsiveness to the husband. In no way can this verse be taken to mean that a wife must submit to abuse from her husband.

> "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." (Ephesians 5.23-24, RSV)

The model suggested here of husband-wife relationship is based on the Christ-church relationship. It is clear from Jesus' teaching and ministry that his relationship to his followers was not one of dominance or authoritarianism, but rather one of servant-hood. For example, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples in an act of serving. He taught them that those who would be first must in fact be last. Therefore, a good husband will not dominate or control his wife put will serve and care for her, according to Ephesians.

> "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body." (Ephesians 5.28-29, RSV)

This instruction to husbands is very clear and concrete. A husband is to nourish and cherish his own body **and** that of his wife. Physical battering which occurs between spouses is probably the most blatant violation of this teaching and a clear reflection of the self-hatred in the one who is abusive.

It is interesting that the passages quoted above from Ephesians (5.21-29) which are commonly used as instruction for marriage are instruction primarily for husbands; nine of the verses are directed toward husband's responsibilities in marriage; only three of the verses refer to wives' responsibilities and one refers to both. Yet, contemporary interpretation often focuses only on the wives and often misuses those passages to justify the abuse of the wives by their husbands. While spouse abuse may be a common pattern in marriage, it certainly cannot be legitimated by scripture.

In terms of sexuality in marriage, again this passage from Ephesians (see also Colossians 3.18-21) has been used to establish a relationship in which the husband has conjugal

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[3] Yad, Ishut, XIV-2, Yale Judaica Series, p. 87

[4] Maimonides was a Jewish philospher (1135-1204) whose *Mishneh Torah* became a standard work of Jewish law and a major source for all subsequent codification of Jewish law.

[5] Yad, Ishut XIV 8, p. 89.



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**rights** and the wife has conjugal **duties.** In fact, other scriptural passages are explicit on this issue:

> "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to the husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." (I Corinthians 7.3-4, RSV)

The rights and expectations between husband and wife in regard to sexual matters are explicitly equal and parallel, and include the right to refuse sexual contact. The expectation of equality of conjugal rights and sexual access and the need for mutual consideration in sexual activity is clear. The suggestion that both wife and husband "rule over" the other's body and not their own refers to the need for joint, mutual decisions about sexual activity rather than arbitrary, independent decisions. A husband does not have the right to act out of his own sexual needs without agreement from the wife; likewise, the wife also. This particular passage directly challenges the incidents of sexual abuse (rape) in marriage frequently reported by physically abused wives.

**The Marriage Covenant and Divorce.** A strong belief in the permanency of the marriage vows may prevent an abused spouse from considering separation or divorce as options for dealing with family violence. For the Christian, the promise of faithfulness "for better or for worse . . . 'til death do us part" is commonly taken to mean "stay in the marriage no matter what," even though death of one or more family members is a real possibility in abusive families. Jews view marriage as permanent, but "til death do us part" is not part of the ceremony. The Jewish attitude embodies a very delicate balance. Marriage is taken very seriously. It is a primary religious obligation and should not be entered into or discarded flippantly. Nevertheless, since the days of Deuteronomy, Jewish tradition has recognized the unfortunate reality that some couples are hopelessly incompatible and divorce may be a necessary option.

For some Christians, their denomination's strong doctrinal position against divorce may inhibit them from exercising this means of dealing with family violence. For others, a position against divorce is a personal belief often supported by their family and church. In either case, there is a common assumption that any marriage is better than no marriage at all and, therefore, should be maintained at any cost. This assumption arises from a superficial view of marriage which is concerned only with appearances and not with substance. In other words, as long as marriage and family relationships maintain a facade of normalcy, there is a refusal by church and community to look any closer for fear of seeing abuse or violence in the home.

The covenant of Christian marriage is a life-long, sacred commitment made between two persons and witnessed by other persons and by God. Jews also regard marriage as sacred and intend that it be permanent. A covenant between marriage partners has the following elements:

1. It is made in full knowledge of the relationship.
2. It involves a **mutual** giving of self to the other.
3. It is assumed to be lasting.
4. It values mutuality, respect, and equality between persons.

A marriage covenant can be violated by one or both partners. It is common thinking in both Jewish and Christian traditions that adultery violates the marriage covenant and results in brokenness in the relationship. Likewise, violence or abuse in a marriage violates the covenant and fractures a relationship. In both cases the trust which was assumed between partners is shattered. Neither partner should be expected to remain in an abusive situation. Often, one marriage partner feels a heavy obligation to remain in the relationship and do everything possible to make it work. This is most often true for women. A covenant relationship only works if both partners are able and willing to work on it. In both traditions, it is clear that God does not expect anyone to stay in a situation that is abusive (i.e. to become a doormat). In the Christian tradition, just as Jesus did not expect his disciples to remain in a village that did not respect and care for them (Luke 9.1-6), neither does he expect persons to remain in a family relationship where they are abused and violated. In Jewish literature, the expectation is also clear:

> ". . . if a man was found to be a wife-beater, he had to pay damages and provide her with separate maintenance. Failing that, the wife had valid grounds for compelling a divorce."[6]

If there is a genuine effort to change on the part of the one who is abusive, it is possible to renew the marriage covenant, including in it a clear commitment to non-violence in the relationship. With treatment for the family members, it **may** be possible to salvage the relationship. If the one who is being abusive is not willing or able to change

[6]Maurice Lamm, *Jewish Way in Love and Marriage*, p. 157



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in the relationship, then the question of divorce arises. At this point in the marriage, divorce is really a matter of **public** statement: "Shall we make public the fact that our relationship has been broken by abuse?" The other option, of course, is to continue to **pretend** that the marriage is intact. (A woman reported that she divorced only a month ago but that her marriage ended ten years ago when the abuse began.)

In violent homes, divorce is not breaking up families. Violence and abuse are breaking up families. Divorce is often the painful, public acknowledgement of an already accomplished fact. While divorce is never easy, it is, in the case of family violence, the lesser evil. In many cases divorce may be a necessary intervention to generate healing and new life from a devastating and deadly situation.

**Parents and Children.** "Honor your Father and your Mother" is one of the Ten Commandments taught to all Jewish and Christian children. Unfortunately, some parents misuse this teaching in order to demand unquestioning obedience from their children. In a hierarchical, authoritarian household, a father may misuse his parental authority to coerce a child into abusive sexual activity (incest). Parents may use this commandment to rationalize their physical abuse of a child in retaliation for a child's lack of obedience.

For Christians, the meaning of the third commandment is made very clear in Ephesians:

> "Children, obey your parents **in the Lord,** for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise) 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up **in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."** (Ephesians 6.1-4, RSV, emphasis added)

Children's obedience to their parents is to be "in the Lord;" it is not to be blind and unquestioning. In addition to instructions to children, instructions are also given to parents to guide and instruct their children in Christian values, i.e. love, mercy, compassion, and justice. Any discipline of a child must be for the child's best interest. The caution to the father not to provoke the child to anger is most appropriate. If there is anything which will certainly provoke a child to anger, it is physical or sexual abuse by a parent.

Jewish tradition deals with the same concern, making a distinction between children based on maturity.

> "One is forbidden to beat his grownup son, the word 'grownup' in this regard, refers not to age but to his maturity. If there is reason to believe that the son will rebel, and express that resentment by word or deed, even though he has not yet reached the age of Bar Mitzvah (13), it is forbidden to beat him. Instead he should reason with him. Anyone who beats his grownup children is to be excommunicated, because he transgresses the Divine Command (Lev. 19:14) 'Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind" (for they are apt to bring sin and punishment upon their children.)"[7]

Even though Jewish law gives great authority to the father in relationship to the children, the requirement for restraint is clearly indicated. Again, the priority is on the welfare of the child.

The other scriptural injunction which is commonly used to justify abusive discipline of children is the Proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This proverb is commonly interpreted to mean that if a parent does not use corporal punishment on a child, the child will become a spoiled brat. This is a good example of a misinterpretation based on a contemporary understanding. In fact, the image referred to in this Proverb is probably that of shepherd and the rod is the shepherd's staff (see Psalm 23.4: "thy rod and thy staff shall **comfort** me"). A shepherd uses his staff to guide the sheep where they should go. The staff is not used as a cudgel.

With this image of the shepherd guiding the sheep in mind, it is certainly clear that children need guidance and discipline from parents and other caring adults to grow to maturity. Children do not need to be physically beaten to receive guidance or discipline. Beating children as discipline teaches them very early that it is all right to hit those you love for their own good. This kind of lesson fosters early training for persons who grow up and subsequently physically abuse their spouses and children.

**Confession and Forgiveness.** The need to admit wrongdoing experienced by an abusive family member is a healthy sign that he/she is no longer denying the problem but is ready and willing to face it. The offender may seek out a minister or rabbi for the purpose of confessing.

Sometimes, however, an abusive father confesses, asks forgiveness, and promises never to sexually approach his daughter again, or a mother swears never to hit her child in anger again. The minister/rabbi is then put in a position of assuring forgiveness **and** evaluating the strength of the person's promise not to

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[7] *Kizzur Shulhan Arukh*

abuse again. While the abuser may be genuinely contrite, he/she is seldom able to end the abuse without assistance and treatment.

The minister/rabbi needs to assure the person of God's forgiveness **and** must confront the person with the fact that he/she needs additional help in order to stop the abuse. For some people, a strong word from a minister/rabbi at this point is an effective deterrent: "The abuse **must** stop now." Sometimes this strong directive can provide an external framework for beginning to change the abusive behavior.

For the Jew the Hebrew term "teshuvah" is the word for repentance. "Teshuvah" literally means "return", clearly denoting a return to God after sin. In Judaism there is a distinction between sins against God and sins against people. For the former only regret or confession is necessary. For sins against people, "teshuvah" requires three steps: first, admission of wrongdoing; second, asking for forgiveness of the person wronged (here abused); third, reconciliation which can be accomplished only by a change in behavior.

The issue of forgiveness also arises for victims of abuse. A friend or family member may pressure the victim: "You should forgive him. He said he was sorry." Or it may arise internally: "I wish I could forgive him . . ." In either case, the victim feels guilty for not being able to forgive the abuser. In these cases, often forgiveness is interpreted to mean to forget or pretend the abuse never happened. Neither is possible. The abuse will never be forgotten — it becomes a part of the victim's history. Forgiveness is a matter of the victim's being able to say that she/he will no longer allow the experience to dominate her/his life — and will let go of it and move on. This is usually possible if there is some sense of justice in the situation, officially (through the legal system) or unofficially. Forgiveness by the victim is possible when there is repentance on the part of the abuser, and real repentance means a change in the abuser's behavior.

Another issue is timing. Too often the minister/rabbi or counselor's need for the victim to finish and resolve the abusive experience leads him/her to push a victim to forgive the abuser. Forgiveness in this case is seen as a means to hurry the victim's healing process along. Victims will move to forgive at their own pace and cannot be pushed by others' expectations of them. It may take years before they are ready to forgive; their timing needs to be respected. They will forgive when they are ready. Then the forgiveness becomes the final stage of letting go and enables them to move on with their lives.

## Conclusion

This commentary addresses some of the common religious concerns raised by people dealing with family violence. It is an attempt to help the reader begin to see ways of converting potential roadblocks into valuable resources for those dealing with violence in their families.

Personal faith for a religious person can provide much needed strength and courage to face a very painful situation and make changes in it. Churches and synagogues can provide a much needed network of community support for victims, abusers, and their children.

It is clearly necessary for those involved in Jewish and Christian congregations and institutions to begin to address these concerns directly. In ignorance and oversight, we do much harm. In awareness and action, we can contribute a critical element to the efforts to respond to family violence in our communities.

# A Commentary on Rural Issues and Family Violence

*Authors:*
*Carol Adams is Director, Chautauqua County Rural Ministry in upstate New York (listed in Successful Rural Programs). She is also a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Through her work Ms. Adams has provided services for rural victims of domestic violence for two years.*

*Denise Hormann, MSW, is Associate Director for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Her contributions to this paper are the result of her contact with rural family violence service providers during her work with the Rural Family Violence Training Project.*

To date, issues specific to aiding rural victims of family violence and to providing community education about the problem in rural areas have received little attention. Understanding of these special rural concerns has been minimal because most of the organizations providing these services have been based in cities and many of the advocates and legislators who are aware of the problem of family violence share an urban bias. In the following paper we identify some of the problems and benefits that individuals and groups encounter when dealing with family violence in rural areas. These concerns also apply to programs in cities or suburbs that are providing outreach to rural areas.

## Attitudes

A plurality of attitudes exists in rural areas as elsewhere. However, service providers in rural areas have identified the following attitudes as prevalent among the majority of individuals who reside in rural areas:

**"Healthy Country" vs "Violent City".** Rural residents perceive life in their environment as healthy compared to city living. Often they meet the mere suggestion that violence in homes occurs in rural areas with great resistance, disbelief, and/or ridicule.

**"Families are Private".** People in rural areas tend to rely on the family (even when dysfunctional) for problem-solving and minimize the significance of domestic problems when they do occur. They believe that "whatever goes on in the home is the family's own business." Therefore, an assault between family members is often not seen as a crime. Historically, human services in general are suspect; any form of services which by its very nature crosses family boundaries and identifies violent intra-family behavior is especially distrusted.

## Roadblocks and Resources for Battered Women Who Want to Leave the Abuser

**Isolation.** Victims of battering are often kept isolated from the rest of their family and friends by the person abusing them. Rural victims of battering are also isolated by distance and lack of transportation. A victim reports that she has no car, that no buses come within 15 or 20 miles of her house, and there are no neighbors near enough to hear her scream when she is attacked.

**Privacy.** Rural area residents have a lack of anonymity. Everyone knows everyone else's business. This can intimidate a battered woman who may decide against filing a police report or taking any other public action because she does not want the facts of her home life to be known and discussed by the residents of her small community. On the other hand, this lack of anonymity may be a resource to a battered woman because service providers may have a lot of information about the family from friends and neighbors and she will not have to "prove" that she needs their assistance.

**Communication.** Word of mouth, or the grapevine, is an effective method of relaying information. However, the grapevine may not be available in an emergency and many rural homes do not have telephones or access to direct dialing. It may be a long-distance call to reach the nearest town with a shelter, services, or crisis line. Victims of family violence may not be able to afford long-distance phone calls and probably do not want a record of the call which the person who abuses might see.

**Police/Legal Response.** The police may be concerned and cooperative but unable to be effective due to logistics. In a rural area there may be county sheriffs, state police, town police, and village police which lack coordination. The police often cannot cross town lines to transport victims to medical care or shelter, because doing so would set a costly precedent or leave the town unprotected. Police have neither the time nor resources to provide victims with transportation or to stay with them to insure their safety, both of which may be mandated by law.

The police response may be inconsistent. The diverse police forces are not trained together and individual police officers may be unfamiliar with new legal developments which pertain to family violence.

Reporting procedures are rarely consistent among the various police forces, so any

attempt to compile statistics is practically impossible. A family violence case might be listed as "lover's spat," "disagreement," "family trouble," "misunderstanding," "upset woman," "lady in distress," "uninvited guest," or "stolen laundry."

A victim of family violence may be reluctant to report an assault to the police because "everyone will find out." The police she calls may well be her neighbors. The criminal charges filed against the spouse are listed in the local paper. In addition, many rural area homes have police scanners. Conversations between police and the dispatcher who instructs them to respond to a family violence call become public knowledge to all of those people who have a police scanner in their home or vehicle.

## Barriers to Overcome

The problems that rural women face when they leave a battering situation are best described by the one word: lack.

**Transportation.** Rural areas lack comprehensive public transportation. Private transportation resources can also be limited. A violent spouse may deny his mate access to car keys or may damage the automobile to prevent her from using it.

**Social Services.** Few social services are available to families of domestic violence because rural areas frequently lack adequately staffed programs with trained personnel who can recognize and deal effectively with intra-family violence. Futhermore, it is difficult to obtain in-service training for existing mental health professionals and other service providers.

**Medical Care.** Most medical services are located in urban areas. Victims of family violence may be reluctant to reveal their injuries to their family doctor (who may also be a friend, next door neighbor, or other familiar person). The lack of family planning services in rural areas is accompanied by a high rate of teenage pregnancies and large families which create additional stress on family units.

**Job Market.** Rural areas lack job opportunities. The number or variety of jobs available may be very limited. People leaving a violent home environment may then have to confront the fact that the only possibilities for employment are in a factory or jobs for which they probably lack appropriate skills.

**Housing.** One-third of the people in the United States live in rural areas; two-thirds of the inadequate housing exists in rural areas. The housing choices available to victims of abuse who want to move out of their abusive households may be limited and very depressing.

**Child Care.** Rural areas lack day care for children, creating an additional burden for mothers attempting to work outside the home and support themselves apart from an abusive relationship.

**Social Ties.** Some rural areas emphasize "coupling" to the extent that separated or divorced people, especially women, are excluded from any positive social outlets and may even be socially ostracized.

**Stresses.** Family tensions intensify as a result of several factors which affect life in rural areas as well as non-rural areas, including:

*Alcoholism*— Alcohol abuse exacerbates family tensions and is often used to excuse violent behavior.

*Seasonal Jobs* — Economic and emotional stress is increased by lay-offs that occur in seasonal jobs.

*Use of Guns* — Hunting is a popular sport and is commonplace in many areas. Gun enthusiasts may keep loaded guns in the house. This creates problems when the guns are then used to terrorize other family members.

*Weather* — One thing that may **not** be lacking in rural areas is bad weather. Sometimes if escape were otherwise an option, the weather (e.g., deep snow) makes it impossible. Poor roads only compound the problem.

## Providing Services in Rural Areas

Those providing services to rural families experiencing violence recognize their resource limitations, yet often try to create options for their clients which universities, YWCA's and women's centers provide in urban areas. Service providers attempt to give persons experiencing abuse in their families as many options as possible at the crucial moments when the family members are ready to take steps to end the violence. To accomplish this, there are both resources and barriers for the service providers in rural areas.

**Organizing.** Meetings are often difficult to arrange in rural areas because the few service providers there are must travel long distances, increasing their sense of isolation from each other. Non-rural family violence service providers tend to have more opportunities to meet and support each other.

However, rural programs also offer some unique advantages. It is frequently easier for family violence staff members in rural communities to utilize other facilities and services in the community, for example a church or mental health center. The fact that "everybody knows everybody else's business" can mean that various services can pool information **(with the client's permission)** and

provide the most comprehensive services.

**Staffing.** Service providers in rural areas often find it easier to contact local residents to request specific resources, such as a one-time safe home or two boxes of diapers.

However, the smaller populations of rural areas create a limited volunteer pool for long-term projects. Urban shelter programs may rely on student volunteers from local colleges and universities to help staff the program; rural areas usually lack these human resources. Unfortunately, the amount of work which needs to be done does not diminish in proportion to its population.

**Funding.** Funding sources seem to assume that rural areas require less money to combat family violence based on smaller populations and smaller caseloads.

Consequently, rural programs have access to few local funding resources, either government or private. Bottom-line operating expenses for family violence service programs plus additional cost factors due to difficulties specific to providing services in a rural setting (e.g., transportation) result in a higher cost per rural client served.[1] Thus, funding agencies may be more inclined to allocate monies to urban areas where a larger population base facilitates showing cost-effectiveness and reporting larger numbers of people served, etc.

Many grants to family violence programs are funded for only one to two years. It is difficult to establish credibility in rural communities in so short a time. Just as the credibility develops, the money ends.

**Privacy.** It is difficult to maintain the anonymity of staff and volunteers who work with victims of family violence. This increases their risk of being attacked by violent family members who may seek retaliation. The lack of privacy in small communities also inhibits people from joining counseling groups because they do not want others in the community to find out about the violence in their homes.

**Migrant Populations.** Some of the rural area's residents are farm workers or others engaged in seasonal or migrant labor. Since these people may reside in an area for only brief periods of time, they may be unaware of services available in the community. Moreover, these can be people who are difficult to identify and/or reach.

**Media.** Rural areas may not have a local newspaper, radio or TV station which increases the difficulty of broadcasting information about family violence services available to area residents. Developing and maintaining productive working relations with active community members becomes even more critical in the absence of formal broadcast media.

**Safe Homes/Shelters.** A shelter for battered women and their children may not be available in the community where they live. Although family violence service providers are developing safe homes and shelters in many rural communities, the safe homes rarely remain anonymous in small communities and the turn-over rate is high. Once a shelter is discovered by an abusive spouse, the safety of all of its residents may be jeopardized.

**Referrals.** In some rural communities it may not be prudent or appropriate to refer family violence victims (or offenders) to local support services (mental health, clergy, police), when these service providers are unaware of the dynamics of family violence. It may be necessary to refer the client to services offered in another town or urban area.

However, when an abused woman from a rural area is referred or avails herself of a shelter in an urban area, she often experiences an "urban crisis" because she is confronted with a new environment and is away from her local supportive network.

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[1] Joani Kamman, "Cost Factors in Providing Battered Women's Services in a Rural Area," New England Learning Center for Women, and Ellen Caine, "The Franklin County Family Violence Project" (See Appendix for more information on their program).

# IV. Appendix

*This section contains:*

Successful Rural Family Violence Programs

Annotated Bibliography

Questionnaire

Workshop Evaluation Forms

Sample Brochure

Reprinted Articles

# Successful Rural Family Violence Programs

*The following are a few of the successful programs providing services to rural victims of family violence. The information presented here was excerpted from materials we received from the programs. The contact people listed are willing to share more information about their programs and are interested in learning about other rural programs.*

### Wenatchee Rape Crisis Center and Domestic Violence Project

The Wenatchee Rape Crisis Center and Domestic Violence Project serves a two-county area in the middle of Washington State. Permanent residents number approximately 65,000. We are a good example of a program in an early phase of rural outreach development. We have developed a cooperative support base of agencies interested in networking to better serve clients.

The area is one of the prime tree-fruit producing areas in the United States and requires a large migrant population to complete the harvest. Each year approximately 7,500 people, mostly Hispanic, move into the area during the months of May through October to work. The Wenatchee program is trying to provide services to these people through direct outreach by Spanish-speaking advocates and by working with community health organizations and other agencies with Spanish-speaking service providers.

We have initiated community education programs to help raise awareness, lower tolerance for abuse, and locate advocates.

Wenatchee Rape Crises Center and
Chelan/Douglas Counties Domestic
Violence Project
P.O. Box 2704
Wenatchee, WA 98801
(509) 663-7446
Contact person: Cathy Elliott

### Chautauqua County Rural Ministry

In 1978 the Chautauqua County Rural Ministry founded the Hotline for Battered Women in Dunkirk, New York to provide emergency help and referrals to battered women. Dunkirk is in the northern part of Chautauqua County which is located in the Southwestern corner of Upstate New York. This county has a population of 147,305 spread out over 1,080 square miles.

The Hotline is coordinated by a CETA worker, who oversees the volunteers' schedules and provides direct aid to battered women at times when volunteers are unavailable. More than 50 volunteers have been trained through special 6-part sessions which include sensitivity training, handling crisis phone calls, the legal rights of battered women, and the principles and philosophy of working with battered women. Hotline milestones have included:

- A Handbook for Beaten Women specific to Chautauqua County
- Helping 109 battered women in the past year
- Emergency shelter is now available on a county-wide basis
- Temporary Orders of Protection which previously were not being processed, are now being awarded
- Police are making referrals to the Hotline
- The Chautauqua County Spouse Abuse Committee was established
- A county-wide Spouse Abuse Conference was held
- Chautauqua County Sherriff's Training now includes a section on battered women
- High School "preventive education presentations" are made

What has the **role of the church** been in aiding in the formation and maintenance of this program?

- It is churches and denominations which support the Chautauqua County Rural Ministry and encourage its involvement in issues such as domestic violence.
- The financial support of the Hotline itself derives overwhelmingly from church groups, including the Presbytery of Western New York Self-Development of Peoples Fund and Western New York District, United Methodist Women.
- Some ministers have begun to offer special counseling for couples with a history of abuse.
- Safe homes were first obtained by appealing to congregations from church pulpits and in church bulletins.
- For the first 14 months, to provide continual coverage and night time availability, the Hotline was located in the manse of the Presbyterian Church of Dunkirk. Calls were answered by the Director of the Chautauqua County Rural Ministry and her spouse, the Presbyterian minister.

Chautauqua County Rural Ministry, Inc.
19 W. Fourth Street
Dunkirk, NY 14048
(716) 366-1787
Contact: Carol Adams

## The Franklin County Family Violence Project

The Franklin County Family Violence Project was funded by LEAA in September of 1979 to develop a network of Franklin County agencies to respond to the problem of domestic violence in our community. Franklin County, Massachusetts, is a rural community of approximately sixty-three thousand people living in twenty-six cities and towns. The funds for the Project went to the Franklin/Hampshire Community Mental Health Center, which in turn subcontracted to three agencies providing services to area families. The largest portion of the funds went to the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), an organization providing 24 hour crisis intervention (a service made possible by the grant), emergency shelter, and short-term counseling for battered women. Additional money went to the Victim/Witness Assistance Unit of the District Attorney's Office to create a Domestic Violence Specialist position. The Domestic Violence Specialist works in the Court system offering information and support to victims of adult domestic violence. The Specialist also acts as a liaison between the Prosecutor and the victim as well as consulting with other agencies in the Project to explore the remedies available to victims through the legal system. The remaining funds from the grant (aside from those monies that remained at F/HCMHC) went to the Beacon Clinic which has thereby developed a twelve week education course for batterers. The Beacon Clinic is the alcohol outpatient clinic of the Franklin County Public Hospital. In addition they are now the only agency in Western Massachusetts offering services specifically designed for batterers.

A major factor in providing services around domestic violence in rural areas is that attitudes change slowly and painfully. In particular the attitude that whatever goes on in the home is the family's own business and its corollary that an assault between family members is not really a crime seems to be dying slowly in Franklin County. We are just beginning to see a change in the attitudes of members of the Criminal Justice System and that education process is far from over. We are hoping to do more work in the fall with community attitudes through the churches and, if possible, the schools. It is disheartening to see the money for domestic violence drying up since the work in this community seems at such a beginning stage.

The Franklin County
Family Violence Project
c/o Franklin/Hampshire Community Mental Health Center
P.O. Box 625
Northampton, MA 01060
NELCWIT (shelter or crisis intervention for battered women): (413) 772-0806

Victim Witness Assistance Unit: (413) 774-3186. Domestic Violence Program (help for the batterer): (413) 772-6388.

Contact people: Ellen Cain and Joani Kamman

## Rural Family Violence Center

The Rural Family Violence Center is the regional office for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. We are to provide technical assistance, resource materials and whatever help we can to strengthen on-going programs and as well, new programs and shelters trying to "get off the ground."

Our accent is on the encouragement of rural services to domestic violence victims, by education of interested groups, supplying our booklets, "Domestic Violence Services in Rural Communities", which were written under last year's Action grant, and sometimes sending consultants out into the field to give them a helping hand.

I have found in the months that I have been in the job the most important contribution I can make is helping to build and strengthen the state coalitions by attending their meetings, sharing information and ideas from each state to the other and suggesting from my experiences with each one, just how important strength in numbers can be by working together and "one hand helping the other." Each state has its own weaknesses and needs but basically, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska are all relatively new coalitions and 3 of the 4 have just passed laws against abuse within the past year or less.

In regards to these laws, now comes the task of seeing to it that they are implemented properly, how to go about it and what major problems need to be solved. The most often heard problem for instance, is how to get the word out to county sheriffs and county attorneys that there is indeed a law now and will they please cooperate. Another need now being addressed is in the area of law enforcement training to include a minimum number of hours on domestic violence within their crisis intervention training.

Rural Family Violence Center
Nebraska Task Force on Domestic Violence
2202 S. 11, Room 455
Lincoln, NE 68502
(402) 435-0027

Contact person: Joan M. Wilson
Joan M. Wilson is the Director of the Region VII Technical Assistance Center under the Office on Domestic Violence in Washington. The program reports directly to Washington and also through the National Technical Assistance Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Center has a grant to develop a network of service providers throughout the four-state area of Region VII and to provide technical assistance to those programs requesting such assistance.

## AWARE

AWARE is a non-profit corporation serving Southeast Alaska. Located in Juneau, Alaska, AWARE provides (1) support and assistance to victims of rape, incest and assault, (2) information and training for law enforcement, medical and social service personnel working with victims of rape, incest, and abuse, and (3) public education concerning problems of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Southeast Alaska, with an area of 61,000 square miles, stretches a distance of 580 miles. Also called the Alexander Archipelago, the region consists of countless islands separated by narrow channels from a thin strip of mainland. Only three communities in Southeast Alaska (Haines, Klukwan and Skagway) are connected by road to the rest of the world. Except for roads between Ketchikan and Saxman, Craig and Klawock, and Haines and Klukwan, all other transportation between communities in the Southeast is by boat or airplane. In 1975 the total population of Southeast Alaska was estimated at 52,341. Of that total, 23% are Native and 77% are all other races.

The following are specific methods that we have found successful in working with rural areas:

- Establish a community advocate. Provide that person with information about the problem and about your program. Visit each advocate in their area at least once a year. Maintain ongoing support with community advocates through mail, telephone calls and personal contacts.
- Develop and distribute a Rural Service Directory manual. This tool can be used by service personnel, advocates and other interested persons when making referrals for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Compile a photo album of the shelter to acquaint women with the shelter and its surrounding areas.
- Set up a Rural Planning Council to coordinate local rural service providers.

**AWARE's Coordination with the Religious Community.** AWARE, at this time, has been renting their shelter house from a local church. We have done program presentations to and for local church groups and recently brought up trainers to do specific training for ministers on counseling issues and religious issues on battered women. (Center staff, Denise Hormann)

Presently, AWARE has been working with a Tlingit man who is a minister to one of our rural villages. We plan to contract with him for staff training on native and religious issues. In addition, if grant monies are received he will be hired to continue our rural outreach program. He and our Education Specialist will travel to the rural villages to train and consult with AWARE's rural contact advocates.

AWARE, Inc.
Aiding Women from Abuse and
Rape Emergencies
P.O. Box 809
Juneau, AK 99802
(907) 586-1090
Contact person: Caren Robinson

## Klickitat County Council on Domestic Violence

The Klickitat County Council on Domestic Violence is highlighted in "Workshop Planning."

Klickitat County Council
on Domestic Violence
P.O. Box 233
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-4022
Contact person: Grace Johnson

# Annotated Bibliography

*The Annotated Bibliography includes information on Incest, Spouse Abuse, Religious Issues, and Other Resources.*

## Incest

**Burgess, A.W., Groth, A.N., Holmstrom, L.L., Sgroi, S.M.** *Sexual Assault of Children and Adolescents*, Lexington Books, Massachusetts, 1978.

An in-depth overview of victims and offenders of child sexual abuse. Included is information on: (a) guidelines for assessment and treatment of the offender, (b) divided loyalty in incest cases, (c) guidelines for assessment and intervention in child sexual assault, (d) interviewing young victims. A good "how to" book for treatment personnel.

**Butler, Sandra,** *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest*, New Glide Publications, 330 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, 1978.

Butler's excellent book includes chapters on the children, the aggressors, the mothers, and the professionals who work with incestuous families. She is clear that incest is non-consensual in nature and uses examples to illustrate the devastating results. The book closes with a series of letters from the author, including a letter of support to young victims, and a letter of recommendations to professionals.

**Finklehor, David.** *Sexually Victimized Children*, The Free Press, New York, 1979.

The author presents introductory and background material on sexually victimized children and the results of a survey he conducted on the topic. His conclusions include the fact that one in five girls and one in eleven boys have had a sexual experience as a child with a much older person, almost half of them being family members.

**Giaretto, H.** "The Treatment of Father-Daughter Incest: A Psycho-Social Approach," *Children Today*, July-August 1976.

The author presents the model for treatment in which he participated, The Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program of San Jose, California. The treatment model provides for: (a) immediate counseling and practical assistance to victims and families, (b) coordination of all services to the victims and family, (c) public and professional information/training. The goals are to hasten the process of reconstitution of the family and to foster individual growth in positive behavior patterns.

Also: "Humanistic Treatment of Father-Daughter Incest" in R.E. Helfer and C.H. Kemp (eds.) *Child Abuse and Neglect — The Family and the Community*. Michigan: Ballenger Publications, 1976.

**Groth, A.N.,** *Men Who Rape*, Plenum Press, New York, 1979.

Based on over 15 years of clinical experience with more than 500 sexual offenders, *Men Who Rape* examines the psychological and emotional factors which predispose a person to react to situational and life events with sexual violence. The sexual abuse of children is one pattern of rape described.

**King County Rape Relief**, *He Told Me Not to Tell*, 305 South 43rd, Renton, WA 98055.

*He Told Me Not To Tell*, is a parents' guide for talking to children about sexual assault. The booklet is designed to help parents incorporate information about sexual assault into their general teachings about personal safety. Cost: $1.00.

## Spouse Abuse

**Davidson, T.** *Conjugal Crime. Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1978.*

*Conjugal Crime* presents information about *and for* all concerned: the wife in need of counseling or shelter; the husband who knows he cannot control himself and wishes to change his behavior, the witnessing children trapped at home with no way to help who need guidance to survive the family crisis. A Directory of shelters for battered wives and their children is included in the Appendix.

Although a bit long-winded, the book is interesting and unique in that *religious issues are included* as part of the problem and the solution.

**Ganley, A. and Harris, L.** "Domestic Violence: Issues in Designing and Implementing Programs for Male Batterers," paper presented at the American Psychological Association meeting, August 26, 1978.

The authors present characteristics of male batterers and the implications for therapeutic intervention. The authors are therapists at the Domestic Assault Program of American Lake Veterans Hospital in Tacoma, Washington.

The paper is easy to read and provides a good introduction to issues that need to be confronted in any program providing treatment to male batterers.

**Martin, D.** *Battered Wives.* Glide Publications, San Francisco, 1976.

A comprehensive examination of the problem of battering. In addition to looking at the incidence of domestic violence and its causes, the legal system and social services (which do not tend to work in favor of battered women), and survival tactics such as karate and education (which may work), are discussed. Martin quotes victims of domestic violence to make clear their feelings; her understanding of the dilemmas faced by these women is evident in her writing.

**Nebraska Task Force on Domestic Violence,** "Domestic Violence Services in Rural Communities," 105 Wedgewood, Suite 6, Lincoln, NE 68510. Copies are available through the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509.

In an attempt to assist domestic violence service providers in rural areas, the Nebraska Task Force on Domestic Violence has two booklets available: one detailing the first steps of organization, the other discussing direct services and funding. The authors are clear that working in rural areas can be both very difficult and very rewarding. The booklets are a good model for groups in rural areas that are beginning to address the problem of domestic violence.

**Straus, M.A.** "Wife-Beating: How Common, and Why?" *Victimology*, Vol. 2, pp. 2-18, Nov. 1977.

Findings from a study on violence between spouses are presented. Although both husbands and wives are committing violent acts, the conclusion is stated that wives are victimized by violence in the family to a much greater extent than are husbands and should therefore be the immediate focus of social policy. The causes of wife-beating are discussed, with emphasis placed on the high level of conflict within the family. Probably the most often quoted statement from this article is Straus' assertion that "the marriage license is a hitting license." Good source of information regarding definition, extent, and causes of wife-beating.

**U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration,** *A Survey of Spousal Violence Against Women in Kentucky*, conducted for Kentucky Commission on Women, July 1979. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

The survey of a representative sample of Kentucky women who are married or living with a male partner produced some striking results, including: (1) 10% of female partners experienced some degree of spousal violence by their partners in the past 12 months, (2) 43% of victimized wives turn to no one for help, (3) of those who seek help, 14% turn to a minister, (4) emergency shelter would have been welcome in 25% of cases, yet was provided in only 2%.

**Walker, Lenore E.,** *The Battered Woman.* Harper & Row, Inc., New York, 1979.

A psychological approach to the problem including the Cycle Theory of Violence and the Theory of Learned Helplessness. The book has three major sections: Psychology of the Battered Woman, Coercive Techniques in Battering Relationships, The Way Out. The information presented is based on three years of research by the author and is recommended for all who are providing services to battered women.

## Religious Issues

**Fortune, M.M. and Hormann, D. L.** "Sexual Violence," *grapevine*, Joint Strategy and Action Committee, Vol. 11, No. 3, September 1979.

The authors drew upon their results of a survey of parish ministers in the Seattle area and their work among clergy and laity in this discussion of sexual violence and the church's response to victims and offenders. The article covers root causes of sexual violence; pornography and advertising; and prevention issues and strategies. Denominational and ecumenical resources are listed.

**Joint Strategy and Action Committee (JSAC),** "The Battered Wife," *grapevine*. Vol. 9, No. 1, June 1977.

An excellent overview of the problem of battered women. Institutional responses to women in crisis are presented, with an emphasis on how existing services have too often reinforced the notion that battering is a "private problem" and should not be interferred with. (The JSAC *grapevine* is distributed to approximately 3,000 ministers throughout the U.S. on a monthly basis.)

**McKenzie, T.** "Sticks and Stones Break More Than Bones," *U.S. Catholic*, October 1979, pp. 34-38.

The author writes out of his experience with the Center for Victims of Family Violence, a shelter for battered women. He states the shelter may be the last resource for some victims (police, friends, priests and ministers having failed them). The pastoral concern of reconciliation vs. separation is discussed as are religious issues raised by the victims.

**Scanzoni, John,** *Love and Negotiate: Creative Conflict in Marriage.* Work Books, 4800 W. Waco Drive, Texas 76703.

Founded on a strong biblical base, Scanzoni presents a sound alternative to the hierarchical view of marriage: mutual submission between husband and wife. He provides a means to help husbands and wives, parents and children make decisions together in a way which stresses equal power and a desire for justice in family relationships.

This book is recommended for use in the religous community as a way to learn *to prevent* violence and abuse in families.

**United States Catholic Conference,** 1321 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

*Violence in the Family: A National Concern, A Church Concern,* is a publication on family violence that includes an overview of the problem, action strategies, program suggestions, and selected resources. Cost: $1.50.

**Wold, M.** *The Critical Moment.* Augsburg Press, 1978.

This book provides a helpful discussion of crisis in women's lives from a Christian perspective. Wold sees critical moments as occasions of growth, provided the person has support and caring from others. Several of her examples have to do with domestic violence.

## Other Resources

**The Minnesota State Task Force on Battered Women and Corrections Department** staff, *Battered Women: A Hidden Crime.* 430 Metro Square Building, 7th and Robert Streets, St. Paul, MN 55101. (Slide show) Cost: $60.00

Ordering information: Documents Section, 117 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55155.

**"Domestic Violence General Information Packet"** contains articles on battered women, information about the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a listing of audio-visual resources and how to obtain them, and potential sources for funding family violence programs.

Cost: Free
National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence
P.O. Box 2309
Rockville, MD 20852

The National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence has a number of publications on domestic violence available at no cost: These include:

"Wife Abuse — The Role of the Social Worker"
"Effective Coordination of Volunteers"
"Programs Providing Services to Battered Women" (a national directory)
"State Domestic Violence Laws and How to Pass Them"

**"Ministries with Women in Crisis"** is a packet for use by local churches and local, district, or conference officers concerned about such problems as domestic violence, economic exploitation, women in prison, substance abuse, sexual abuse, child abuse and single mothers. The packet contains background materials and guides for carrying on a ministry, and some examples of successful church and church-related programs.

Cost: $1.95
Service Center
Board of Global Ministries
United Methodist Church
7820 Reading Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237

**Mitchell, J. Gary** (Producer). *Battered Women: Violence Behind Closed Doors.* J. Gary Mitchell Film Company, 1977. (Film)

**Mitchell, J. Gary** (Producer). *Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes.* J. Gary Mitchell Film Company, 1976. (Film)

Ordering information:
MTI Teleprograms, 4825 N. Scott Street, Schiller Park, IL 60176.
Telephone: (800) 323-1900
Cost: Approximately $400 to purchase; $60.00 for one week rental

*Monthly Memo* is a newsletter that covers the activities of the 10 Regional Technical Assistance Centers on Domestic Violence.

Cost: Free
National Technical Assistance Center on Family Violence
1917 Washtenaw Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

*Response* is a monthly publication that provides updates on state and federal legislation about family violence as well as literature and film reviews, and a calendar of events.

Cost: Free
Center for Women Policy Studies
2000 P Street N.W., Suite 508
Washington D.C. 20036

**Sexual Assault Center,** Harborview Medical Center, 325 Ninth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104. (206) 223-3047.

The Sexual Assault Center has bibliographies available on incest and sexual assault of children, sexual assault of women, sex offenders, and the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault.

**"The User Manual Series"** is a set of manuals designed to increase professionals' and para-professionals' understanding of the nature, extent and methods of treating family violence. Included in the series:

"Family Violence: Intervention Strategies"
"A Community Approach"
"Parent Aides in Child Abuse and Neglect Programs"
"Early Childhood Programs and the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect"
"Child Protection in Military Communities"

Cost: Free
National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013

**Valusek, J.E.** The "Bits and Pieces" Series, #3, "People are Not for Hitting." 3629 Mossman, Wichita, Kansas 67208, 1974.

John Valusek suggests a new commandment: People are Not for Hitting. One chapter in the book discusses the many things a child may learn from a spanking, including the message that if someone does something you don't like, and you tell that person to stop, it is okay to hit him/her if they don't stop. The author systematically strips away all the rationalizations used by parents and schools to justify corporal punishment against children. Cost: $2.50.

# Questionnaire

**Part 1.**

Family violence means different things to different people. Which of the following acts are included in the term "family violence" as far as **you** are concerned? Check the "Yes" box for as many acts as you feel should be included in the definition of family violence. Check the "No" box for all acts that you feel should **not** be thought of as family violence. Assume that the acts were **not** done playfully or accidentally.

☐ Yes ☐ No 1. A teenager uses physical force to compel a brother or sister to engage in a sexual act.

☐ Yes ☐ No 2. A teenager harms property belonging to a brother or sister.

☐ Yes ☐ No 3. One spouse slaps the other with an open hand.

☐ Yes ☐ No 4. A teenager threatens a brother or sister with death or serious injury.

☐ Yes ☐ No 5. One spouse strikes the other with a fist.

☐ Yes ☐ No 6. A parent or stepparent threatens his/her child with death or serious injury.

☐ Yes ☐ No 7. A teenager strikes a brother or sister with a fist.

☐ Yes ☐ No 8. A teenager uses physical force to compel a parent or stepparent to engage in a sexual act.

☐ Yes ☐ No 9. A teenager threatens to kill or injure seriously someone who is loved by a brother or sister.

☐ Yes ☐ No 10. A parent or stepparent threatens to kill or injure seriously someone who is loved by his/her child, such as the other parent.

☐ Yes ☐ No 11. A spouse harms property belonging to the other spouse, such as a family heirloom or pet.

☐ Yes ☐ No 12. A teenager strikes a parent or stepparent with a fist.

☐ Yes ☐ No 13. A parent or stepparent harms property belonging to his/her child, such as a toy or pet.

☐ Yes ☐ No 14. A spouse threatens to kill or injure seriously someone who is loved by the other spouse, such as the other spouse's mother.

☐ Yes ☐ No 15. A parent or stepparent strikes his/her child with a belt, paddle, or other object.

☐ Yes ☐ No 16. A parent or stepparent spanks his/her child hard enough to cause the child some pain, but not hard enough to cause any physical harm.

☐ Yes ☐ No 17. A teenager threatens a parent or stepparent with death or serious injury.

☐ Yes ☐ No 18. A parent or stepparent fails to provide adequate supervision for his/her child or children, such as leaving an infant or young child at home alone.

☐ Yes ☐ No 19. A parent or stepparent uses force or threat of harm to have sexual intercourse with his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 20. A parent or stepparent strikes his/her child with an open hand.

☐ Yes ☐ No 21. A teenager threatens to kill or injure seriously someone who is loved by a parent or stepparent.

☐ Yes ☐ No 22. A parent or stepparent, **without** using force or threat of harm, has sexual intercourse with his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 23. A parent or stepparent uses force or threat of harm to have open mouth kissing with his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 24. A parent or stepparent, **without** force or threat of harm, fondles the breasts or genitals of his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 25. A teenager strikes a brother or sister with an open hand.

☐ Yes ☐ No 26. A parent or stepparent strikes his/her child with a fist.

☐ Yes ☐ No 27. A teenager harms property belonging to a parent or stepparent.

☐ Yes ☐ No 28. A parent or stepparent spanks his/her child hard enough to cause bruises or welts.

☐ Yes ☐ No 29. A spouse threatens the other spouse with death or serious injury.

☐ Yes ☐ No 30. A teenager strikes a parent or stepparent with an open hand.

☐ Yes ☐ No 31. A parent or stepparent, **without** using force or threat of harm, has open mouth kissing with his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 32. A parent or stepparent uses force or threat of harm to fondle the breasts or genitals of his/her child.

☐ Yes ☐ No 33. A parent or stepparent with adequate financial means fails to provide proper nutrition for his/her child or children.

☐ Yes ☐ No 34. One spouse uses physical force to compel the other spouse to engage in a sexual act, such as intercourse.

☐ Yes ☐ No 35. A mother's boyfriend spanks the woman's child hard enough to cause the child some pain but not hard enough to cause any physical harm.

☐ Yes ☐ No 36. A mother's boyfriend strikes the woman's child with an open hand.

☐ Yes ☐ No 37. One spouse forces the other to have no contact with family members or friends.

☐ Yes ☐ No 38. One spouse regularly refers to the other in a demeaning way, such as "no good tramp, worthless bum."

**Part II.**

1. During the past 12 months, approximately how many people did you counsel or advise concerning a personal problem? _____ .

2. During the past 12 months, approximately how many people in each of the following categories did you counsel or advise? Unless otherwise indicated, abuse includes physical, psychological, or sexual harm.

_____ Wives who were abused by their husbands.

_____ Husbands who were abused by their wives.

_____ Children who were abused physically or psychologically, but not sexually, by a parent, stepparent, or other family member.

_____ Children who were abused sexually by a parent, stepparent, or other family members.

_____ Parents or stepparents who were abused by their child or children.

_____ Husbands who abused their wives.

_____ Wives who abused their husbands.

_____ Parents or stepparents who abuse their child or children.

_____ Children who abuse their parent(s), stepparent(s), or other family members.

_____ Parents or stepparents who report that their spouse is abusing their child or children.

_____ Women who were abused by a boyfriend.

**Part III.**

Listed below are several hypothetical situations, each followed by a set of statements about your response. We understand that your actual response would depend upon specific features of the situation. Given the limited information provided, please indicate as best you can how you would **probably** respond by placing an "X" over the numbered blank which describes how true or false the statement is.

1. A man in your congregation comes to you for help, explaining that he has been having sexual relations with his teenage daughter for several months.

   (a) I personally would provide counseling to help the person change his behavior.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (b) I would urge the person to leave the home for the time being.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (c) I would offer to provide counseling for others in the situation, as well.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (d) I would refer the person to another professional (e.g., a psychologist) or to a community agency (e.g., a mental health center).

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (e) I would contact the police or other official agency having the power to intervene.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (f) I would offer counseling designed to prevent the break-up of the family even if it meant that the affected family members had to accept the current situation.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

2. A woman in your congregation comes to you for help, explaining that she often disciplines her child so severely that the child suffers physical harm.

   (a) I personally would provide counseling to help the person change her behavior.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (b) I would urge the person to leave the home for the time being.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

   (c) I would offer to provide counseling for others in the situation, as well.

   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

(d) I would refer the person to another professional (e.g., a psychologist) or to a community agency (e.g., a mental health center).

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(e) I would contact the police or other official agency having the power to intervene.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(f) I would offer counseling designed to prevent the break-up of the family even if it meant that the affected family members had to accept the current situation.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

3. An adult man in your congregation comes to you for help, explaining that when he quarrels with his wife, he often loses control and beats her.

(a) I personally would provide counseling to help the person change his behavior.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(b) I would urge the person to leave the home for the time being.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(c) I would offer to provide counseling for others in the situation, as well.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(d) I would refer the person to another professional (e.g., a psychologist) or to a community agency (e.g., a mental health center).

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(e) I would contact the police or other official agency having the power to intervene.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(f) I would offer counseling designed to prevent the break-up of the family even if it meant that the affected family members had to accept the current situation.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

4. A teenage member of your congregation comes to you for help, explaining that at her father's insistence she has been having sexual relations with him for several months.

(a) I would not do anything until I contact others in the situation to check the accuracy of the report.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(b) I would urge the person to leave the home for the time being.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(c) I would offer to provide counseling for others in the situation, as well.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(d) I would refer the person to another professional (e.g., a psychologist) or to a community agency (e.g., a mental health center).

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(e) I would contact the police or other official agency having the power to intervene.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

(f) I would offer counseling designed to prevent the break-up of the family even if it meant that the teenager had to accept the current situation.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

**Part IV.**

The following statements concern possible ways to prevent family violence, including spouse battering and child abuse. Please indicate, for each statement, how true or false you believe the statement to be.

1. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if religious organizations clearly and consistently spoke out against it.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

2. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if the offenders were punished more severely than they are now.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

3. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if all persons contemplating marriage were taught parenting skills and marital communication skills.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

4. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if all magazines, films, and books which showed violent or sexually demeaning acts against women and children were less available than is now the case.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

5. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if nationwide education programs were instituted to show the causes, consequences and scope of family violence.

Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
1 2 3 4 5

6. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if the traditional roles of husbands and wives were adhered to in our society.
   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

7. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if the legal rights of children were expanded.
   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

8. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if nationwide programs were instituted to encourage victims of family violence to discuss their victimization with their minister, priest, or rabbi.
   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if sexually explicit magazines, films, and books, whether or not violent or demeaning, were less available than is now the case.
   Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if alcohol abuse were more effectively prevented than it is now.
    Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
    1 2 3 4 5

11. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if all perpetrators of family violence were required to undergo treatment and rehabilitation before being permitted to return to the family.
    Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
    1 2 3 4 5

12. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if nationwide programs were instituted to encourage victims of family violence to report their victimization to law enforcement authorities.
    Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
    1 2 3 4 5

13. The frequency of family violence would be reduced if community agencies to address the problem were established and utilized.
    Definitely True ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Definitely False
    1 2 3 4 5

**Part V.**

Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false by checking the appropriate box. If you don't know or aren't sure, check the box followed by a "?".

☐T ☐F ☐? 1. During the past 12 months, the problem of sexual abuse of children was presented to my congregation in a sermon.

☐T ☐F ☐? 2. During the past 12 months, the problem of one spouse being abused by another was presented to my congregation in a sermon.

☐T ☐F ☐? 3. During the past 12 months, the problem of sexual abuse of children was presented in a class, workshop, conference or seminar for adult members of my congregation.

☐T ☐F ☐? 4. During the past 12 months, the problem of one spouse being abused by another was presented in a class, workshop, conference or seminar for adult members of my congregation.

☐T ☐F ☐? 5. During the past 12 months, the problem of sexual abuse of children was presented in a class, workshop, conference or seminar for teenagers or youths in my congregation.

☐T ☐F ☐? 6. During the past 12 months, the problem of one spouse being abused by another was presented in a class, workshop, conference or seminar for teenagers or youths in my congregation.

☐T ☐F ☐? 7. During the past 12 months, the national organization for my denomination provided us with curriculum materials or sponsored a workshop or conference on the problem of sexual abuse of children.

☐T ☐F ☐? 8. During the past 12 months, the national organization for my denomination provided us with curriculum materials or sponsored a workshop or conference on the problem of one spouse being abused by another.

**Part VI.***

Listed below are several statements about wife battering and child abuse. Indicate, by placing an "X" in the appropriate box, whether or not the statement is true or false. If you don't know whether the statement is true or false, place an "X" in the box labeled "?".

☐T ☐F ☐? 1. Surveys indicate that wives are physically abused in approximately ten to fifteen percent of all American homes.

☐T ☐F ☐? 2. A fairly high proportion of the husbands who beat their wives — at least 1/3 — also beat their children.

☐T ☐F ☐? 3. A fairly high proportion of wives who are physically abused — at least 1/3 — beat their children.

☐T ☐F ☐? 4. In almost all cases, wife beating can be attributed to excessive use of alcohol by the husband.

*Answers to Part VI, page 96.

□T □F □? 5. On the whole, husbands who physically abuse their wives tend to be in low status occupations.

□T □F □? 6. The large majority of husbands who physically abuse their wives were beaten as children or witnessed their fathers beat their mothers.

□T □F □? 7. Most physically abused wives report that when promptly summoned, the police are helpful to them.

□T □F □? 8. Even when an abusive marital relationship is long-standing, if the couple stays together, the physical abuse will eventually stop in almost all cases.

□T □F □? 9. Available evidence indicates that most wives who are physically abused by their husbands find it helpful to discuss the problem with a priest, minister, or rabbi.

□T □F □? 10. The large majority of cases of child sexual abuse within the family occur in intact families, i.e., where both parents (or stepparents) are present in the home.

□T □F □? 11. Most parents who engage in incest with a child have records of previous psychiatric problems.

□T □F □? 12. Most parents who engage in incest are otherwise law-abiding citizens who have rarely been arrested for anything but minor offenses, such as traffic violations.

□T □F □? 13. Approximately 90% of known victims of child sexual abuse within the family are female.

□T □F □? 14. In most states, a minister, priest, or rabbi who learns of child abuse, whether sexual or physical, is required by law to report the matter to law enforcement authorities.

□T □F □? 15. National surveys have indicated that approximately 1/4 of the women in the general population have experienced some form of childhood sexual abuse, usually by a parent.

□T □F □? 16. Most parents who engage in incest with a child do so because the child was sexually seductive.

**Part VII.**

Finally, would you please answer as many of the following questions as you can about yourself. Remember, we will not be able to identify your questionnaire.

1. In what state do you do most of your work? _____

2. Are you male or female? □ Male □ Female

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your denomination? _____

5. What is your predominant race or ethnic background? □ American Indian; □ Asian or Pacific Islander; □ Black; □ Caucasian; □ Hispanic; □ Other (specify) _____

6. In which type of community do you do most of your work? □ Rural or small town (e.g., under 10,000); □ Medium to large town (e.g., larger than 10,000 but under 100,000); □ Suburban (small to large town located very near a larger urban center); □ Urban (at least 100,000)

7. What is the approximate size of your congregation? _____

8. Is your congregation primarily: □ Affluent; □ Middle class; □ Working class or poor

9. What type of work do you do primarily: □ Parish minister; □ Religious education; □ Specialized ministry; □ Other (specify) _____

10. Have you had seminary training? □ Yes □ No

11. Have you completed a Clinical Pastoral Education program? □ Yes □ No

12. Have you completed a specialized course of study in counseling since seminary? □ Yes □ No Please indicate course: _____

_____

**Note: When photocopying the questionnaire, be sure to cover these answers so that they are not included on the questionnaires you distribute to participants.**

**Answers to Part VI.**

1. False — the percentage is higher than ten to fifteen percent.
2. True.
3. True.
4. False — see presentation on "Counseling Concerns: Batterers".
5. False — battering cuts across all socio-economic boundaries.
6. True.
7. False — police response tends to be inconsistent.
8. False — the abuse will probably increase in intensity and frequency.
9. False — one study indicated that 43% of physically abused wives turned to no one for help; of those who did, 14% turned to a minister.
10. True.
11. False.
12. True.
13. True.
14. True.
15. True.
16. False — most parents who engage in incest with a child do so because the child is vulnerable and they can control the child.

# Workshop Evaluation
# Day 1 of the Three Day Workshop

Date: _____

1. Please circle your general degree of satisfaction with this session:
   1 — extremely dissatisfied
   2 — very dissatisfied
   3 — somewhat dissatisfied
   4 — neutral
   5 — somewhat satisfied
   6 — very satisfied
   7 — extremely satisfied

2. Please indicate by putting the appropriate number before each item how much each activity contributed to your overall learning. (1=none at all; 7=extremely)

| **Activity** | **Comments** |
|---|---|
| ____ Family Violence definition and overview | _____ |
| ____ Small group exercise | _____ |
| ____ Film or slide show | _____ |
| ____ Implications for the Abuser | _____ |
| ____ Implications for the Victim | _____ |
| ____ Role play and team exercise | _____ |

3. Any additional suggestions or comments:

**Optional:**
Please indicate whether you are a: ☐ Minister; ☐ Social service agency representative;

☐ Other _____

# Workshop Evaluation
# Day 2 of the Three Day Workshop

Date: _____

1. Please circle your general degree of satisfaction with this session:
   1 — extremely dissatisfied
   2 — very dissatisfied
   3 — somewhat dissatisfied
   4 — neutral
   5 — somewhat satisfied
   6 — very satisfied
   7 — extremely satisfied

2. Please indicate by putting the appropriate number before each item how much each activity contributed to your overall learning. (1=none at all; 7=extremely)

| **Activity** | **Comments** |
|---|---|
| ____ Child victims overview | _____ |
| ____ Small group exercise | _____ |
| ____ Film: "Incest: The Victim Nobody Believes" | _____ |
| ____ Counseling Issues: Offender | _____ |
| ____ Counseling Issues: Non-offending parents | _____ |
| ____ Counseling Issues: Victim | _____ |
| ____ Role-plays | _____ |
| ____ Rural Issues | _____ |

3. Any additional suggestions or comments:

**Optional:**
Please indicate whether you are a: ☐ Minister; ☐ Social service agency representative;

☐ Other _____

# Workshop Evaluation
# Day 3 of the Three Day Workshop

Date: _____

1. Please circle your general degree of satisfaction with this session:
   1 — extremely dissatisfied
   2 — very dissatisfied
   3 — somewhat dissatisfied
   4 — neutral
   5 — somewhat satisfied
   6 — very satisfied
   7 — extremely satisfied

2. Please indicate by putting the appropriate number before each item how much each activity contributed to your overall learning. (1=none at all; 7=extremely)

| **Activity** | **Comments** |
|---|---|
| ____ Religious Issues Introduction | _____ |
| ____ Model role-play | _____ |
| ____ Brainstorm religious issues | _____ |
| ____ Bible Study | _____ |
| ____ Pastoral Issues discussion | _____ |
| ____ Role-plays | _____ |
| ____ Local Resource Assessment | _____ |
| ____ Goal setting process | _____ |

3. Any additional suggestions or comments:

4. What topics would you like to see covered more thoroughly in future workshops?

**Optional:**
Please indicate whether you are a: ☐ Minister; ☐ Social service agency representative;

☐ Other _____

# Workshop Evaluation
# 1-Day Workshop

Date: _____

1. Please circle your general degree of satisfaction with this session:
   1 — extremely dissatisfied
   2 — very dissatisfied
   3 — somewhat dissatisfied
   4 — neutral
   5 — somewhat satisfied
   6 — very satisfied
   7 — extremely satisfied

2. Briefly state your objectives or expectations for this workshop: _____

   _____

3. To what extent were your objectives or expectations achieved?
   1 — extremely dissatisfied
   2 — very dissatisfied
   3 — somewhat dissatisfied
   4 — neutral
   5 — somewhat satisfied
   6 — very satisfied
   7 — extremely satisfied

4. Please indicate by putting the appropriate number before each item how much each activity contributed to your overall learning. (1=none at all; 7=extremely)

| **Activity** | **Comments** |
|---|---|
| ____ Overview and Reflection | _____ |
| ____ Film or Slide Show | _____ |
| ____ What Is Battering? | _____ |
| ____ Counseling Issues | _____ |
| ____ Religious Issues | _____ |
| ____ Local Issues and Goal Setting | _____ |

5. Any additional suggestions or comments:

**Optional:**
Please indicate whether you are a: ☐ Minister; ☐ Social service agency representative;

☐ Other _____

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**, battering between people who live in the same household, is a serious social problem affecting the lives of men, women and children in our community. Over half of the families in the U.S. experience physical violence between men and women at some point in their relationship. In Tacoma/Pierce County alone in 1978, nearly 1500 women and children found safe and secure housing at the YWCA Women's Support Shelter when they fled from abusive men. Because the F.B.I. believes that ten times more rapes are committed than are ever reported *and* that the incidents of wife beating are even more numerous and less often reported, we believe that these 1500 people represent only the tip of the iceberg.

**BECAUSE THE CHURCH HAS BEEN SILENT** about this problem, often both victims and batterers are hesitant to seek help from their minister or congregation. And sometimes because of religious beliefs, they hesitate to seek help at all from any source. So the violence continues—and is destructive to all the family members.

**WE HAVE A PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY**, as Christians, to offer both victims and batterers support and guidance as they seek to end the violence. We also have a prophetic responsibility to speak out against this form of violence in the family which is destructive to human beings and the fabric of the family itself.

**THIS WORKSHOP WILL PROVIDE BASIC INFORMATION** about domestic violence, its causes and consequences. The workshop will address:

- the victim
- the batterer
- religious concerns which may arise
- community resources for victims and batterers
- educational resources

**AFTER ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP, YOU WILL BE BETTER PREPARED TO RESPOND TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHEN IT OCCURS IN YOUR CONGREGATION.**



WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:30 AM | Registration |
| 9:00 | Welcome<br>Introduction and Reflection,<br>The Rev. Marie Fortune |
| 9:30 | Film: "Battered Wives: Violence Behind Closed Doors" |
| 10:00 | Discussion of Film |
| 10:20 | Break |
| 10:30 | Focus on the Victim<br>Presentation by Stu Dautoff |
| 11:30 | Lunch (served at the meeting) |
| 12:30 PM | Focus on the Batterer<br>Presentation by Dr. Anne Ganley |
| 1:30 | Theological and Biblical Concern<br>Presentation and discussion<br>The Rev. Marie Fortune and<br>Denise Hormann |
| 3:10 | Break |
| 3:20 | Community Resources in<br>South King County |
| 3:50 | Evaluation |
| 4:00 | Adjourn |

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How to Register:

Please return the attached registration form no later than September 1 and the enclosed $12 Workshop fee to:

Rev. Henry Seaman
Church of the Good Shepherd
Box 3108
Federal Way, WA 98003

Domestic Violence: The Church's Response
Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Congregation _____

I am (check all that apply) ___ Clergy ___ Lay Person ___Mental Health Professional
___ Other

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Domestic Violence Workshop
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* PERSONS SEEKING ANSWERS IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT TO A DIFFICULT SOCIAL PROBLEM

* PLANNED FOR CHURCH PEOPLE BY CHURCH PEOPLE



LEADERSHIP

Mr. Stuart Dautoff, Family and Child Service, East Valley Office

The Rev. Marie M. Fortune, Prevention of Sexual Violence Project

Dr. Anne Ganley, Psychologist, American Lake Veteran's Association Medical Center

Ms. Denise Hormann, MSW, Prevention of Sexual Violence Project

Ms. Julie Matuzak, South King County Multi-Service Center

Continuing Education for Clergy and Congregation

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:
The Church's Response

"I don't want my priest to know that I beat my wife."

"I went to my minister for help, but he told me to go home and be a better wife."

The pastor said, "I can't believe that a church-going man would treat his wife like that.

September 11, 197º
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Our Savior's Baptist Church
701 South 320th Street
Federal Way, Wash. 98003

**********

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN RURAL AMERICA
# PROBLEMS & POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Presented by Shirley J. Kuhle, GRI, CRS
930 Manchester Drive
Lincoln, Nebraska 68528
Commissioner, Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice
(Nebraska Crime Commission)
President, Nebraska Task Force on Domestic Violence
Board Member, National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

A recent Harris poll in Kentucky revealed that one woman in ten had experienced some form of spousal violence in the last 12 months.** Of these, only 10% had actually called the police. 21% had experienced violence at some time during the marriage. This under reporting led to the following observation: and I quote.

> Family Violence, for outward appearances, seems to be a problem on society's periphery mainly because incidents involving low income and low education women get reported to police much more frequently than those involving the middle class and the better educated. Yet data on actual incidence of spousal violence indicates no significant differences among income and education groups. The poor become part of the official police record; the middle class conceals its family violence from public and official view.*

From this the question arises, does this underreporting indicate that the victim does not want assistance? In examining the survey further, it can be found that while only 5% received counseling, 34% wanted counseling. 2% received legal assistance while 27% wanted some form of legal aid. Only 2% receiving emergency shelter; 25% wanted it.* Another question arises here: if the victims wanted the services, why didn't they receive them?

The answer in rural America is that they often could not. Sparse population and great distances between neighbors creat an isolation that is psychological as well as physical. In fact, the rural woman caught in a violent home situation suffers a great special sort of isolation. There is the obvious geographic location of a farm woman who may live anywhere from five to 50 miles, or even farther, from her nearest neighbor or from the nearest town, and, therefore, from help of any kind. This means that the batterer, who is generally over-possessive by nature and actually wants to segregate his victim from society and thus make her completely dependent upon him, both emotionally and financially, has a perfect built-in situation in which to do so. The women who suffer this geographical as well as societal isolation have the same feelings of depression and despair which all abused wives have in common, but they are likely to be more severe because she is really very much alone in her plight. We all quote from the expert, Erin Prizzey, who says: "They all scream quietly so the neighbor won't hear; but with rural women it won't really matter whether or not they scream at all!"

Transportation is a critical problem in rural areas, where public transportation is unheard of. For a woman to leave the house after a beating, whether permanently or only for a night, or to keep an appointment at the welfare office, she needs transportation, and in rural areas this means a car. If she cannot drive or cannot get the keys or does not have money for gas, then she cannot take the family car. This means that she must rely on a friend, relative, law enforcement officer, or service provider. If none of these are available, she must walk.

It is important to realize that any transportation is directly tied to road conditions and weather. A snow storm can block travel to a town for days. Rain can make dirt roads impassable. Either condition would inhibit walking. If the woman does manage to reach town, and if the town is on a well-traveled highway, she should be able to catch a bus — unless it has already been through town for that day. In that case, she will need a place to stay.

Safe shelter in rural areas is difficult to come by. There is generally only one motel in towns of 4,000 population or less. Since everyone's car is generally know, and motel clerks are not bound by confidentiality guidelines, the whole town, not to mention the abuser, could soon know where the victim is located.

This points up another problem with which people born and raised in rural areas are quite familiar: the local "gossip mill." Because everyone in small towns usually knows everyone else's business, I believe an attitude of concealment is much more common in smaller communities than it is anywhere else. For example, in a city, if a woman calls for help, she can usually remain anonymous, whereas in a small town, if she calls for help, she will very likely be the main topic of conversation the next day, and she knows it. This alone is sufficient to prevent many women from leaving home or seeking help.

The law enforcement people, who traditionally don't like to become involved in family disputes, are especially reluctant in small communities when they know both parties personally. Those of us who have worked with domestic violence — rural or urban — have encountered many of the same problems in dealing with public officials, but several factors are present in smaller communities which must be considered unique. One is, as I have said, this personal-familiarity situation, which is unavoidable in small towns. Added to this is the fact that, unlike a city, where the police force is generally quite large, the likelihood of the same officer's being summoned to the same home is greatly increased in small towns where there are perhaps only three or four officers to be called. We often find that they are very antagonistic toward chronic cases, especially if the wife had called before, even a few times. It has not been uncommon for them to ignore her calls for help altogether by telling themselves and the community: "So-and-so is at it again." Besides being few in number, rural law enforcement personnel often have little training. In outstate Nebraska, for example, all that is required to become an officer is several weeks at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Center, and there is no provision for in-service training, as such. Procedure policies are generally set at area meetings which can include ten or more counties. This means that when a poor policy is adopted, it can be very widespread. For example, we found that in a number of counties officials had devised what they decided was the best solution to family-dispute calls — simply to jail both husband and wife. This procedure, we were told, not only served to separate the parties but also discouraged future calls. We even had highway patrolmen tell us this was what they did because they were included in the area meetings. It is hard to believe that anyone would ignore or even jail a woman who has been beaten, but that is what was happening. Women were also receiving very poor advice concerning their legal rights because, to tell the truth, law enforcement officers themselves in rural areas may not know what the statutes are or what options are available to a woman who has been assaulted. And women trying to get divorces experience similar problems. In rural areas, a lawyer may refuse to take a divorce case, especially if he knows either party or if he knows that violence is involved. Furthermore, many states require concilliation attempts via counselors or ministers. Counseling has been known to dissuade many victims. Some churches or ministers have interpreted the Bible to read that a wife is bound to her husband no matter what his actions. They have determined that the husband's role as protector and overseer of his wife can justify his use of discipline. Professional counselors

have accused victims of avoiding the problem by divorcing the cause. Instead, they are encouraged to return home and take responsibility for their role in the attacks, analyze what behaviors provoked the attacks, and modify these behaviors. Although it is becoming recognized that it is, in reality, the abuser who is responsible for his own actions, many counselors are not so enlightened. Besides the law enforcement and legal system, women can also seek help from social services, of which the most widely available is public welfare. Many victims do not want to go on welfare as there is a great social stigma in rural areas on those who cannot care for themselves. Grocery clerks have been publically rude to persons with food stamps. County welfare directors have denied services, even when the applicant is eligible, because they personally feel she does not deserve assistance. County boards have interrogated hopeful AFDC applicants until they have burst into tears. But, to a woman without resources in a rural area, there is little alternative.

Although other human service providers exist, the area's population base is often insufficent to justify a full time position. Until recently the closest mental-health group for some areas was 80 miles away, and that's not uncommon. In one area a mental-health counselor divides her time among all the towns in a four-county region, but she is so overburdened with work that she cannot accept any new cases.

Another problem relates to the distance factor in rural areas affects one service we almost always take for granted: the telephone. Calls between towns are nearly always long distance, so cost can be a factor prohibiting women from seeking help. Also, she may be afraid to place a long distance call that could be easily traced and hard to explain when the phone bill arrives. Additionally, party lines, which unfortunately are popular eaves dropping tools for town gossips, are still prevalent in rural areas.

All the factors I have just mentioned work together to greatly compound the difficulties involved in trying to meet the needs of victims of family violence. The solutions to these problems will require creativity and persistence.

One area in which an immense amount of work needs to be done is education and training. While this is true every where, it is particularly true in rural areas, because rural can be defined as a mindset typified by an essentially conservative outlook on sex roles, the family and methods of problem solving. There is widespread acceptance of stereotypic roles, and many people, including women, believe it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife.

We need large-scale educational programs directed at the general public to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence and to dispel the myths and stereotypes that surround it. We can use local newspaper, radio, public TV, and volunteers can speak to churchs and civic groups. We need to examine the causes of violence and teach people alternative ways of dealing with stress, tension, and anger. We need to change attitudes toward women, women's roles in society, the "macho" concept of masculinity, and violence of all types. We must make it clear that violent behavior is unacceptable. Children must receive special attention in these programs, for they are our hope for a non-violent future.

We need special training for law-enforcement and mental-health agencies, legal and medical personnel. Often such agencies and personnel accept the myths and are unsympathetic or, when they want to help, are unprepared, both personally and within their agencies, to deal with the complexities of a battered woman's dilemma.

Teachers and school counselors need information and training, too, to recognize behavior patterns in children that may indicate abuse in the home. In rural areas, the teacher is the person a child is most likely to approach about personal problems, and is the person who has the most contact with the child. Many children are victims of abuse. Many more are indirect victims of violence in the home, and their teachers must become sensitive to these indirect effects on the children.

We need to establish transportation systems to make human services more available, because public transportation is inadequate at best in the cities of these regions and nonexistent in the small towns and rural areas. In South Dakota, a plan is being developed to provide a "relay" system for victims to be transported by volunteers each forty miles until a safe house or shelter is reached. Since there are only five shelters in the state at this time, it would take a large number of volunteers to carry out this plan. However, it remains a remarkable idea which could be used in other states.

Emergency and long term shelters are hard to find in rural areas. For example, there are no long-term shelters in Nebraska. The best we have been able to provide in rural Nebraska are emergency shelters in motels outside the immediate area or in homes of local task-force members far enough from the natural home situation that the victims can remain anonymous. Often, there are no legal-aid resources, and this has presented a serious problem considering the fact that we many times encourage women to take rather serious legal steps to solve their dilemmas. Some local task-force groups have dealt with this lack of legal-aid resources by working with attorneys to develop a revolving system by which each one will accept cases of this nature periodically; other groups are pursuing the possibility of counties' hiring a public defender by district with four or five counties sharing the cost.

We need to expand and coordinate the services that are available. Local volunteer groups have proved very effective in rural areas and need support. In Nebraska, there are 20 projects for victims of domestic violence. Most of these projects rely heavily, and some entirely, on volunteers. Furthermore, over half of these projects are in towns with populations under 10,000, and they are the main service providers in their area. Cooperation and networking among agencies and volunteer groups is essential and must be encouraged. Some services, such as shelters, may work best on a regional level in rural areas. This means cooperation and communication. All these efforts must be aimed at the empowerment of women.

And finally, what can we do about the abuser? Is he not also a victim, trapped with a violent behavior pattern that he neither understands nor believes wrong. Can we find a solution to this victim's problems besides punishment of jail, fines or committing him to institutions, mental or penal? Since this is the basis for our problem of family violence, what else can be done for him? Can we change this behavior or channel this aggression to better society rather than abuse it? Yes, it is being done.

In the last few years there have been more and more programs developed to deal with the abuser. Most of these programs are an extention of existing shelters and shelter programs who were already providing service to women and children who were victims. But although this is still a relatively new field, many abuser groups are actively working throughout the United States to stop the cycle of violence and provide the hope that these families in trouble can be held together. Most of these programs are currently only in the larger cities, however, by gaining more knowledge of how to work with the abuser towards change, this important information can be shared with smaller communities and eventually the rural areas to provide hope that abuse can be curtailed and the family unit can remain in peace and understanding of each other.

All these projects need funding, of course, and funding is a major problem in rural areas. Some areas receive money from county revenue sharing, state allocations, and county or state tax receipts from offender's fines and marriage license fees, but sparse population and great distances increase costs, and the small population means less money available internally. Because there is less population, therefore fewer victims in rural areas, government funding sources tend to excuse their lack of aid as being less cost effective per capita. However, that should not penalize victims who must remain victims in their own homes just because they prefer to continue living a rural lifestyle. The private sector could provide funds for programs and child care services to victims who wish to separate

from their violent spouses and support themselves and their families by working in small town factories, as many of them are doing now. The billions of dollars lost annually by industry in work time as result of family violence could be lessened, at least in part, by contributions and cooperation of these same industries.

Now we come down to the bottom line. Who can or will provide the time and energy involved in implementing all these changes and possible solutions.

Most likely, it will be the grass roots programs which have sprung up all over the country in both urban and rural areas. The dedicated people who have worked so valiantly to start programs and task forces to provide encouragement, alternatives, and shelter to victims and their children, will not give up. Let us hope that more and more people who provide the traditional services will provide more cooperation and funding to these groups.

These programs are indeed the only service organizations that have been able to help the victim get it all together; where these programs exist, there is no more hunting from agency to agency for help. The available crisis lines operated by these programs provide not only help, information, and referrals, but most importantly, provide a service to any victim who calls just by providing an understanding ear.

The services they provide include counseling and advocacy that formerly was not available. These programs also provide the only emergency shelter that victims seek, even though they may be filled, few are turned away. In areas where no shelter house is available, volunteers open their homes to victims or transport them to a safer location. Networking between communities and states is becoming commonplace, offering a side choice of referral resources. More cooperation from law enforcement is evident, although it is still not perfect, because these programs can assist the officer who doesn't know what to do with a battered victim. State legislatures are finally passing laws against spouse abuse, some states have included funding of shelters and task forces in their appropriations, although the amounts are never enough.

There will never be enough volunteers, safe houses or services to meet the need of these unfortunate victims. But, we are doing something about it and have come a long way in just a few years. With the help and support of interested professionals such as you here today, much more will be done.

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JSAC grapevine

Vol. 9, NO. 1 JOINT STRATEGY AND ACTION COMMITTEE, INC. June, 1977

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# THE BATTERED WIFE

*Editor's Note: Increasingly, those concerned about sexism and women's rights have turned their attention to two issues which can be loosely grouped under the heading of sexual violence. Wife beating and rape are specifically sex-related. They happen to women because of women's special physical, economic and emotional vulnerability in male dominant societies. The fact that such violence is receiving more attention today does not mean that these crimes are necessarily new—though there is some evidence to indicate that they may be increasing in incidence within the last decade. (The Women's Christian Temperance Union of the 19th century, though often ridiculed as a puritanical reform movement, was, in fact, a response to the phenomenon of wife abuse.) What we are experiencing is women becoming more vocal about subjects which formerly were considered the secret shame, or failure, of the victims who lived through the experience.*

*In creating a climate for change in the images we hold of ourselves, the women's movement has brought the harsh underbelly of life in a sexist society into the open. It is not a pretty picture that we see; but it does give the lie to the notion that "women's lib" is a superficial or passing phenomenon and that if women would just be passive and dependent things would be all right again. In fact, most wife battering occurs precisely in situations in which the wife is too dependent on the husband. (Many wives report being beaten during pregnancy when they are most vulnerable.)*

*Churches are being forced to deal with these issues as more and more women who work for churches, serve in churches, or are now studying in seminaries seek to minister to their sisters in need. New forms of ministry in shelters for battered women, rape crisis centers and alternative health/family planning counseling and advocacy programs are being created by such women through funding and in-kind support from churches. The JSAC Women's Ecumenical Consulting Group feels this is an issue which needs to be taken much more seriously by the churches. Church support for such ministries is still a drop in a very large bucket.*

## THE SKELETON IN OUR SOCIAL CLOSET

Wife beating (taken here to mean the beating of any woman who cohabits with a man whether or not they are legally married) is perhaps the most unreported crime in the country. Because it occurs between intimates, the police and courts are reluctant to interfere. Calls to the police for help in marital violence, for example, are usually reported as "domestic disturbances," if they are reported at all. Courts have rarely defined such domestic disturbances as "criminal behavior" warranting indictments under the law. In addition, because of the stigma attached to victimization by spouses, women who are assaulted are usually ashamed and/or afraid of speaking out. Statistics on the incidence of wife abuse are therefore hard to come by, though some which are available indicate the enormity of the problem. The FBI estimates that the number of wife beatings reported in this country are three times higher than the number of rapes reported, and there is a rape reported every three minutes. In addition, the FBI estimates that this is less than 10% of the total number that occur in this country and are not reported.[1] The following statistics were compiled by Del Martin for her book, *Battered Wives:*

- In Chicago, a police survey conducted between September 1965 and March 1966 demonstrated that 46.1% of all the major crimes except murder perpetrated against women took place in the home. The study also revealed that police response to domestic disturbance calls exceeded total response for murder, rape, aggravated assault and other serious crimes.
- Boston City Hospital reports that approximately 70% of the assault victims received in its emergency room are known to be women who have been attacked in their homes, usually by a husband or lover.
- In Atlanta, 60% of all police calls on the night shift are domestic disputes.
- In New Hampshire, for his study *The Violent Home*, Richard Gelles interviewed forty neighbors of known violent families as a means of establishing a nonviolent control group with which the violent group could be compared. Of these supposedly nonviolent families, 30% had experienced at least one incidence of violence, and for 12% violence was a regular occurrence.[2]

## THE WIFE BATTERER: WHO IS HE?

Prior to the outbreak of interest in the subject during the last year, most people had tended to see wife-battering as a pathology rooted in the socio-economic problems of the lower classes; indeed this myth is still widely believed. Much research in the area by professional sociologists tends to perpetuate this view. Wife-beating, it is contended, stems from male unemployment or financial insecurity, alcoholism or drug addiction, or from a "culture of poverty" in which violence is the norm. Women who work with battered wives, however, are beginning to explode this myth. They find that wife-battering, like rape, cuts across all racial, cultural and economic lines. Wives of lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists, judges and police have been seen by women in counseling situations. Prominent and wealthy men such as Prime Minister Sato of Japan and Aristotle Onassis among others are known to have beaten their wives or lovers. A study done in Norwalk, Connecticut—a community of wide socio-economic range—found that there were roughly as many cases of wife abuse reported as in a West Harlem area of the same size.[3] Another study showed that contrary to popular belief, low-income respondents were no more prone to nor readily accepting of violence in the home than were middle or upper-income respondents. The same study revealed the disturbing fact that 25% of the sample group actually approved of husband-wife battles; the greater the educational level of the respondents, the greater their acceptance of marital violence.[4] As if to confirm these findings, as this editor was working on this article, a friend of a friend called to ask for help. The woman lives in an affluent Westchester, New York suburb. Unable to leave the home because she is economically dependent on her professional husband, she has been at the mercy of this violent man for two years and was now desperate to find a way out of her dilemma.

Perhaps the most widely shared conclusion by researchers on the relationship of social data to incidences of wife battering is the correlation between children who witness violence in the home and acts of violence committed by these same children when they become adults. The home is the training ground for violent behavior. Richard Gelles goes so far as to say that "in most cases a marriage license also functions as a hitting license."[5] One researcher has estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 children in the U.S. need protective services and that 30,000 to 37,500 children may be badly hurt by their parents each year. A researcher for the U.S. Department of HEW cites one million cases of child abuse and neglect each year.[6] If these patterns are carried into adulthood, then the incidence of marital violence may, indeed, be of epidemic proportions.

## WHY DO MEN BATTER?

Many theories have been put forward to attempt to explain why men beat their wives. In addition to the socio-economic theories cited earlier are those which attribute violence to psychotic behavior, to women's masochism and men's jealousy, or to the physical effects of alcohol and drugs on men. In the view of those who work most closely with the problem, none of these reasons is sufficient by itself to explain the universality of wife beating. In the case of alcohol, for example, a study cited by Del Martin found that in a Harlem community only 30% of the family disturbances in which specially trained policemen intervened was alcohol use by the accused involved, and in most of these cases alcohol was not the cause of the beatings. Rather, men sometimes use alcohol to justify the beatings by claiming loss of control. Though some violence is the result of psychopathology, most of the violence cannot be attributed to this source.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Cited in "Social Responses to Battered Woman," by Lisa Leghorn, speech given at the American Friends Service Committee-sponsored conference on Battered Wives, Feb. 12, 1977.
2. *Battered Wives*, by Del Martin, pg. 11-14.
3. Cited by Martin, pg. 19.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *The Violent Home*, by Richard Gelles, pg. 153.
6. Cited in Martin, p. 23.
7. Leghorn, *op. cit.*
8. "Why Men are Angry at Women," by Donald Morlan, speech given at the AFSC conference on battered women.
9. Martin, pg. 96.
10. Quoted in Leghorn, *op. cit.*
11. *Ibid.*

More and more women who deal with battered wives have come to the conclusion that there is a deeper and much more complex explanation for the problem—rooted in the "pathology" of sexist societies in which men are taught to view domination of women as their birthright. Lisa Leghorn, who directs a shelter for battered women in Massachusetts, states the case this way:

**"I . . . feel that the present organization of home and family whereby the husband wears the proverbial pants, and the wife and children are commonly viewed as his dependents and his property is a primary cause of the high incidence of wife abuse. More basically, I feel that the problem stems from our entire social, economic, political and cultural organization of society whereby women as a group are viewed as dependent, child-like and capable of less—though castrating amazons if we strive for more. Also, our society is grounded in a profound disrespect of and hostility toward women's physical integrity, which is exemplified in such institutions as our medical profession's profits gleaned from unnecessary hysterectomies and illegal abortions, to the witch killings when so many women were slaughtered because of their preferred independence from male institutions. . . . In my experience it seems undeniably true that the battering is an attempt to put and keep women in their place. It happens whenever a man perceives that a woman is either stepping out of her role, that she might be contemplating stepping out of her role, or even simply to insure that she would never dare so much as reflect on the possibility of contemplating stepping out of her role. The various interpretations of what it means for a woman to step out of her role are so arbitrary and irrational as to boggle the mind. Story after story is told of a woman beaten or killed when she over-cooked a roast, undercooked an egg, wore her hair in a ponytail or didn't wear her hair in a ponytail. The only common denominator in all the stories is the fact that in any given instance, a woman did not conform totally to a man's expectations, not only in terms of her behavior, but also in terms of her thinking—that she didn't second guess what his will might be in any given situation."**[7]

The differential power relations between the sexes and male dominated society's sanction of this difference seems the only viable explanation for what appears to be a conspiracy embedded in the entire fabric of mores, laws, and economic policies which mitigate against the battered wife's ability to find redress for her grievances. Why do men batter? Simply because for centuries they have been given this license by society. Laws sanctioning such treatment of women appear in the Bible, throughout Greek and Roman civilization, and are codified in the English Common Law from which our own is derived. A male-dominated church which for centuries preached women's subordination to men (in contravention of its own savior's demonstrated relationship with women) has not helped to alleviate this situation and may, in many instances, have even supported it.

But what lies behind this pervasive pattern of mysogyny in our institutions? The Reverend Donald Morlan, a member of the Park Slope Clergy Association of Brooklyn, New York, which is attempting to deal with the problem of wife battering, believes that virtually all men are angry at women and that a man who batters is acting out in extreme form what most men feel, at least part of the time. He sees this anger generalized in the way men joke about women and in the violence and sexual objectification of women which pervades so much of our culture. (Feminists have noticed an alarming increase in the images of women as victims of male violence which are used to sell records and pornographic magazines and which are appearing in movies and TV.)

Reverend Morlan's observation about male anger is borne out by Dorothy Dinnerstein, in her pioneering work, *The Mermaid & the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise*, as well as in the clinical experience of psychiatrist Wolfgang Lederer, author of *The Fear of Woman*. Both Morlan and Dinnerstein, a clinical psychologist, find the problem of male anger rooted in the fact that most men are reared primarily by women. The highly ambivalent stage of every infant's life is shaped by its experience with its mother. As Morlan explained it to an audience at an American Friends' sponsored conference on battered women held in New York City in February:

**It is she [the mother] who introduces us to the world—the world of touch, the world of boundaries, the world of language etc. All along we have mixed feelings about this world—known to us primordially as a Mother-World. It is good and it is bad. It satisfies, but it also leaves us howling. It accepts us, but it also rejects us. And since she is the only substantial emotional presence in our world, our relationship with her bears the overwhelming burden of our emotional life.**

Why then don't women have this kind of anger toward mothers? Dinnerstein explains that women grow up to become the Mother, whereas men project all their ambivalence toward the mother onto their adult partners, thus continuing the pattern begun in infancy. Cultures like our own which reinforce taboos against intimacy and emotionality between adult men perpetuate the cycle. In his address to the conference on battered women, Reverend Morlan outlined several long-range socio-economic changes which we need to make if we are ever to correct this neurotic cultural patterning. His suggestions follow closely on those outlined by Dinnerstein.

**1) We need to stop being just Mothered and start being Parented from the moment of birth. All of us need a bisexual emotional foundation.**

**2) We need to be willing to express and advocate the development of same-sex emotional intimacy as well as heterosexual emotional intimacy. It is time we men started carrying our part of the emotional weight.**

**3) Together we need to break down the impossible image of Masculinity which dooms us men to feelings of frustration and rage, and puts women in the role of our projection targets. We men need to believe it is all right for us to be vulnerable if we are ever going to be comfortable with our own unique mixtures of strength and weakness.**

**4) For the time being we need a lot of work on breaking down our rituals of projection. We need to be told: "I'm not your Mother." "I'm not your Judge." "You are not resonsible for the whole world."**

**5) We need to find ways of letting out the anger that we feel in not seriously destructive forms.**

**6) And finally—if we are going to have parents, if we are going to become more comfortable with ourselves—there must be fundamental change in our social and economic arrangements. Our present economic system requires its quota of failures to keep us all obediently in our particular assembly lines working hard and grumbling little. The sixties were somewhat noisy. The seventies are comparatively quiet. How come? The number of failure slots was increased through unemployment. One of the reasons for our concern about women-beating at this particular time in history is the dramatic increase in women-beating because of unemployment.**

**Men will be angry . . . and find their anger channeled against women . . . as long as all of us shackle our physical and emotional lives to an economic system which values impersonal profits more than whole persons. We need to bring about a new social and economic arrangement which is focused on *persons in relationship*. Our concern with women-beating is one aspect of the many faceted struggle for Liberation expressed by the Women's Movement, Gay Liberation, struggles throughout the Third World and the fight against multinational corporatism . . . but in the meantime we can all contribute to the struggle and to our own lives by stealing time away frm the System to be parents and adults who place a great value on the quality of our emotional life.**[8]

## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO WOMEN IN CRISIS

Before such sweeping changes like those proposed above can be brought about, there is the problem of how to help the woman in crisis. Such help involves a multiplicity of approaches, including psychological and social service counseling and referral, providing shelters where women and their children can go to escape physical harm, legal services, changes in family, marriage and criminal laws.

## RESPONSE OF THE COUNSELING PROFESSION

When a woman's life is threatened, the most immediate need is not counseling, but a safe shelter. Yet ironically, most battered women are not given what they immediately need but are "counseled" in ways that perpetuate and prolong the problem.

Traditonally oriented psychiatrists and counselors have more often than not counseled women to understand and sympathize with the men who beat them. More concern has been shown for the insecurity of the man, than for the health and safety of women and children. Women are often counseled to think that it was they who brought on their husbands fit of rage, much as rape victims have been made to feel that they enticed the rapist. Such counseling simply reinforces the woman's image of herself as guilty and undeserving of help, causing her to return to a situation in which she is likely to be victimized again.

Counseling now being provided in shelters and programs run by sensitive women, usually feminists, focus not on the victim's psychology but on her immediate circumstantial needs. Beyond that, the victims are encouraged to see themselves as persons worthy of standing up for their own rights and of seeking help. When brought together with other women who have been beaten, the victim's isolation, shame and fear are broken down, and she begins to see the problem in its larger, social-pathological dimensions, rather than as her personal dilemma. For this reason, peer counseling is a strong component in women's shelters.

## PROVIDING SHELTER

Given the need of women and children physically to escape the batterer, our society provides almost no resources for this most dire need. Before the rebirth of feminism in the late '60's, there were, according to Del Martin, perhaps two shelters in the U.S. which would house women and their children fleeing from their mates, and both of these have since closed. The Women's Movement—especially the efforts of Erin Pizzey who established the first women's shelter specifically for battered women in England in 1971—began to raise the need for shelters to a new level of consciousness. Today new shelters are springing up in many parts of the world as women begin to understand the prevalence of the problem. Whenever a new refuge is opened, reports Del Martin, it is filled to capacity almost immediately and remains full, though the turnover of residents may be rapid.[9]

In such shelters women and their children find warm and effective support. At shelters run by feminists the battered woman becomes fully aware of all the possibilities open to her, including the possibility of legal separation and divorce, avenues to pursuing educational or career goals, legal services, physical training to prevent victimization, social services and child care. Because of the professional and bureaucratic separation of services in our society—plus the institutionalized prejudice against taking wife battering seriously—feminist-run shelters are the only place where women in crisis can find such all-round support.

Setting up and running shelters, however, is not easy. In the first place, most women's groups lack the capital to purchase a building large enough or adequately equipped for the purpose. Thus, a major fund raising effort is needed in the first place, and then some ongoing means of financial support. Secondly, many zoning regulations make it difficult to purchase suitable buildings in residential neighborhoods. New York State law, for example, requires separate shelters for parents and children. In order to open two shelters in New York City now being planned, the women will have to change New York State law. Third is the question of safety. A shelter is "safe" only so long as the victimizer cannot get at his mate when she is lodged there. For this reason, many women's shelters have run into difficulty either in having to pay out enormous bills to make the place safe from intruders, or in terms of the negative community response when they have attempted to purchase a building in a residential area. Many times, in spite of enormous need, shelters have been closed because they have been declared unsafe by city inspectors.

Before shelters can be secured, however, other services are needed. Most shelters have begun as hot-line services where victims could phone in anonymously to a group of counselors who might answer questions, do some therapy by phone and steer the women to the available resources.

In the absence of an established residence in New York City, the Park Slope Clergy Association in Brooklyn is working with women's groups to locate a network of "safe homes" around the borough—that is, places in the homes of Brooklyn residents and church members where women and their children can go for three days to escape physical danger. In that period of time a female counselor will meet with the woman and give whatever counseling information and other services she is able to provide. In addition, a male counselor is sent to counsel with the man who battered the woman. Maria Roy, director of New York City's Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) program has pointed out that churches have long had a tradition of offering sanctuary to victims of violence. What better way for the churches to minister to those in need but by relying on a long tradition of such service! Unfortunately, most churches still do not recognize there is a problem.

There has been some discussion among feminists over whether providng shelters for women, instead of men, might not be the wrong tactic. After all, it is pointed out, why should the victim of violence have to be uprooted? Why not the batterer? Obviously, the reason why shelters are built for women is because there is now no statute which will remove the husband to a shelter to prevent his abuse. Until and unless the courts and police change both their philosophy and their attitudes, we will continue to have to provide shelters outside the home to women. Some feminists believe that this could be an advantage for women if it were so recognized. One of the factors which makes wife-beating possible is the isolation of women with men in the individual family unit. A network of homes run for and by women across the country would begin to undermine the hegemony of the patriarchal, nuclear family set-up in which so much violence occurs.

## THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Women usually turn to the legal system as a last resort, after the psychiatric and social service systems have talked them into returning to their husbands several times over. They turn to the police, usually in the middle of a fight, because at that point they are the only social agency prepared to intervene. Yet the response of the police is generally far from adequate to the problem. Partly it stems from the attitude of the police themselves, who because of having grown up in a patriarchal society, identify with the men rather than with the female victims. Commander Bannon of the Detroit Police explained this behavior in a speech last year:

**"Those of us in Law Enforcement, who are the first official representatives of the government to respond to violence in the home are socialized in precisely the same manner as the citizens we are expected to protect. Policemen, as most males, are taught self-reliance, 'fight your own battles,' philosophy from the cradle. Similarly we are socialized into the conscious perceptions of masculine-feminine roles. In our society this process translates into dominance-submission terms. The man is the boss, the owner, the female the subordinate. Most frequently**

**it is when these role perceptions are not observed that violence occurs between married dyads, or those who are involved in relationships which approach our definition of marriage—that is, economic dependence or inter-dependence and sexual access. Taken together with our views on the sanctity of the home the above social factors guarantee that police will be less than enthusiastic in becoming involved in family disputes.**

**As it turns out we reject the rule of law which makes it a crime to assault another person regardless of our relationship to them or degree of injury. We substitute in its stead an arbitrary determination usually based on irrelevant factors. Most frequently the factor which will cause police intervention is a family fight which disrupts the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood. Next most frequently the use of a deadly weapon and thirdly the degree of injury involved. All of course irrelevant to the substantive charge of assault.**

**In my view the police attitude, which seems to say that what happens between man and wife in their own home is beyond the authority or ability of the police to control is a 'cop-out.' The real reason that police avoid domestic violence situations to the greatest extent possible is because we do not know how to cope with them. And besides we share society's view that domestic violence is an individual problem and not a public issue. . . .**

**It's amazing to me that we are seemingly unaware of the extreme paradox of delegating to police officers the role of arbiters of family disputes. Of all the non-athletic occupations none is so absorbed with the use of physical coercive force as that of police officer. Nor are any more thoroughly socialized in their masculine role images. . . .**

**It's clear from our research that in virtually every case of homicide of the social conflict variety there has been a long history of violence within the dyad. It is possible to predict a homicide if only we recorded this violence. However, it's not possible to predict who will be the perpetrator and who the deceased. Because in the final resolution of the conflict situation it is frequently the former victim of all those assaults who finally resolves the problem society has ignored and kills her tormentor. Thus again she validates the use of violence to resolve her problem. One that society is unable or unwilling to even recognize as a public issue let alone redress."**[10]

Even when the police are sensitive and responsive, the most they can do is to inform a woman of her legal rights and help her to a hospital or to safety. Assault and battery is a misdemeanor which the policeman must have witnessed in order to make an arrest. Moreover, it is hard to get the law to intervene when the dispute is within the sanctity of the home. Rape statutes, for example, do not apply to married couples, even if the husband is estranged and has returned for the express purpose of assaulting his wife. In some states like California felony laws do apply to wife abuse, but the requirements of proof are so difficult and the courts so reluctant to convict that the law is virtually useless. Even where laws are used, the attitude of court officials often undermines their effectiveness. A Family Court judge in Boston was reported to have told a husband in a divorce case: "You know you can't go around beating your wife anymore, but if I were you, I would do the same thing."[11]

In most cases the only legal recourse for an endangered woman is either to make a citizen's arrest of her husband (if such is possible given the circumstances!) or to obtain an "order of protection" or a "peace bond" from the Family Court. An order of protection is a restraining order requiring the husband to stay away from his wife or to refrain from offensive conduct for a specific period of time. It is usually issued by a judge who decides after hearing evidence of the husband's threatened or repeated acts of violence. Usually, however, a restraining order is issued only after a divorce suit has been filed. When a husband disobeys the judge's order he can be cited for contempt of court, a misdemeanor. Battered wives are vocal in their condemnation of the effectiveness of orders of protection to protect. The peace bond is an amount of money posted by the husband as "security to keep the peace" after a court hearing at which evidence of misconduct is produced. Failure to post the bond can result in the man's imprisonment. This route, though used in Illinois and New York is nevertheless open to the charge of unconstitutionality in that it discriminates against the poor.

According to most people knowledgeable and concerned about wife abuse, the full weight of the law is designed to protect the family assailant rather than the family victim. Those working on wife abuse eventually run up against the need to change legislation if the rights of women are ever to be given minimal protection under the law. A group of women in New York City have filed a class action suit against the N.Y.C. Police Department and Family Court for failure to assist battered wives.

## ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE: THE BANE OF BATTERED WIVES

Women's economic dependence on men, coupled with discrimination against women in the workplace, is usually the cause of women's remaining with battering husbands. As Lisa Leghorn points out, "no matter what social and economic class a woman's husband belongs to, when she leaves her husband, she is leaving money behind. In this sense all women are of one class; they receive no money for their work in the home, put in unlimited hours of service, and can be beaten mercilessly on the whim of their masters." The only recourse for such women is the welfare system, and in order to qualify they must have left their husbands and be without any other means of support. When the government talks about trying to preserve the family at the same time that it cuts back appropriations for social services like welfare and child care, it actually contributes to family destruction and makes a mockery of the sentiment.

In this way, a sexist economic system which refuses to recognize women's unpaid work in the home as socially necessary labor, and then punishes her for this failure when she looks for work outside the home, conspires to keep the wife battering syndrome operative and the level of violence in our society at already intolerable levels.

## RESOURCES

*Battered Wives*, by Del Martin, Glide Publications, 1976. The best all round resource on the problem.

*Crimes Against Women: Proceedings of the International Tribunal*, ed. by Diana E.H. Russell & Nicole Van de Ven, Les Femmes, Millbrae, Ca.

*Scream Quietly or the Neighbors Will Hear*, by Erin Pizzey, London, If Books, 1974. The pioneering work begun in Britain.

*The Violent Home*, by Richard Gelles, Sage Library of Social Research, 1972.

*Working on Wife Abuse*, by Betsy Warrior, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, Ma. 02139. $3.50 each. A guide to wife-abuse programs around the country.

ED 167 871

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# Domestic Violence: Issues in Designing and Implementing Programs for Male Batterers

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presented at American Psychological Association
Tuesday, August 29, 1978

In recent months the problem of Domestic Violence has commanded increased national attention. Presently the two houses of Congress are considering Bills to meet the multiple needs of families caught in the throes of violence. Research and clinical experience have multiplied as evidenced by the literature now available on child abuse, incest, and battered women. More and more community groups are responding to the problem by establishing crisis lines and/or shelters for the estimated 1.8 million battered women (Straus, 1977) and their children.

Contrary to popular myths about domestic violence, the physical assaults are not caused by the victim's behavior or by her masochism (Walker, 1977; Martin, 1976). Furthermore, it is the position of these authors that except for physical self defense, the use of violence is NOT justified in intimate relationships. Consequently, providing treatment for or doing research on the victim will not stop the violence of the batterer. While the victims and their children must be given priority in support services, prevention of domestic violence requires treating the offender.

## Sociological Factors

If the victim does not "cause" the violence of the offender, who or what does? Sociologist Murray Straus (1977) outlines several cultural norms that facilitate violent behavior in the family. He states that this society views violence as a legitimate means of resolving conflict. Thus, it should not be a surprise that family conflict is sometimes resolved in this way. Not all family violence is a response to family conflict. Some of this violence is related to stresses on the job or elsewhere. Until recently society considered what went on in the home as outside the domain of public concern. Thus, there are fewer sanctions against violence taking place in the home than anyplace else. If a man is assaultive as a reaction to the stress of living, he is more likely to be violent at home than elsewhere. One myth used to justify violence is that any person will be violent given the right provocation. Social learning theorists such as Bandura (1973) indicate that actually there are a wide variety of responses to stress or frustration, with violence being only one of them. While these and other cultural norms about male dominance (Martin, 1976) influence people to be violent, they do not explain fully why some men are assaultive and others are not. Nor do these sociological factors suggest clearly what can be done for those who do batter.

At this point there are no clearcut answers to those questions. There has been little research on men who batter spouses.[1] However, we do have some clinical impressions gathered from (1) our work with batterers on an individual basis, (2) our experiences as co-directors of a pilot project for male veterans who assault adult family members and (3) our conversations with other clinicians working in the area of domestic assault. This information raises significant issues in designing and implementing programs for male batterers.

## Characteristics of Male Batterers

In order to develop treatment programs, attention must be given to an understanding of the men who batter. There seems to be concensus on two points. First, men who assault adult family members come from all races, socio-economic classes, and occupations.

[1] This article is limited to a discussion of men who batter other adults with whom they have intimate relationships. For our population the abused person has been female. The authors refer child abusers to other resources.

There is some controversy as to whether there is a higher percentage of batterers in one socio-economic class than another and if so, what does it mean (Straus, 1976). While this controversy is not fully resolved, it is clear that we can no longer assume that domestic violence is limited to only one group. Secondly, men who batter seem either to have been battered as children or to have witness physical abuse in their families. Our own limited research sample indicates that 63% had that experience.

While there appears to be some concensus on those two points, it is more difficult to generate a definitive profile of a "typical batterer." The comprehensive research on men who batter has yet to be done. Thus, our understanding rests on a list of characteristics which seem to apply in varying combinations to batterers. This is not an exhaustive list but a select one on which the aspects of the Domestic Assault Program at American Lake Veterans Hospital was based.

Many men who batter women have intense, dependent relationships with their victims. They seem to experience a great deal of fear of losing the relationship and take extreme measures in controlling it. These controlling behaviors include the violence itself, monitoring all activities of the victim, limiting who she sees, and so forth. The men appear excessively possessive and jealous about their partners. For example, one man's wife was fired from her job because he called her sixteen times a day to check on her whereabouts. Before she was fired, he insisted that she stop taking her lunchbreak out of the office because he was fearful of her meeting someone and starting an affair. Her compliance did not reassure him as he then went to her office each day to sit with her while she ate. It is possible that the men feel so dependent on their relationships because they see themselves as having few other supportive relationships. Although they may appear to socialize easily and know many people, the men do not see these friendships as affirming of them. As one man put it, "everyone wants something from you . . . you can't trust anyone." The Domestic Assault Program at the hospital attempts to confront that dependency by placing the man in a four week residential program. There he is forced to function somewhat more independently of his victim, while being encouraged to build other relationships with his peers. Both the buddy system (pairs of men are expected to cooperate in certain tasks and activities) and the group nature of most activities were designed in part for those purposes.

Battering men seem to have difficulty in identifying many of the emotions except for anger. Their experience of fear, anxiety, frustration, hurt, irritation, guilt, disappointment, etc., get lumped together and are expressed as anger. Usually the target of this anger becomes someone or something in the batterer's immediate environment (such as a spouse) and yet that person may have nothing to do with the distress. One man in the treatment program who was experiencing a great deal of anxiety about another resident's abrupt departure from the hospital became enraged when another veteran attempted to beg a cigarette. Most states of arousal get labeled as anger. During treatment the residents are encouraged to become more attuned to small cues of arousal and to appropriately label that emotion.

Even as the men begin to identify and label more appropriately their emotions, they seem to have difficulty in verbally expressing what they think, feel, or want. They may have highly developed verbal skills for their professional lives as lawyers, businessmen, contractors, etc., but do not have the verbal skills to express their personal needs. Instead they expect their intimates to know what they want without their asking for it and to automatically fulfill those needs. The Domestic Assault Program attempts to deal with these deficits through assertiveness training. A part of that approach focuses on confronting the irrational beliefs which prevent them from being assertive. One example of their irrational beliefs is "if she really loved me, she would know what I want without my asking."

These men may be impulsive, acting without thought of the consequences. One man cited a time where he had quit his job suddenly because his boss had asked him to stay overtime. He said he was very shocked when he realized that quitting meant he would have to look for a new job. He had acted impulsively without considering how his quitting would affect him. This impulsivity can greatly affect their motivation and follow-through in treatment programs.

The men are not always violent. They also can be charming and quite loveable both with their victims as well as with others outside the family. Some of the men in the veteran's project experience periodic depressions and are sometimes suicidal. For some of the men, but not all, those suicidal feelings are connected to their recognition and disapproval of their own violent behavior. For some it occurs when the victim makes a move independent of his control, such as seeking therapy or separation.

One characteristic that seems common in most men who batter is their minimizing and denying. They tend to minimize the seriousness of their violent behavior to themselves as well as to others. Although at one time they may answer in detail specific questions about their severe beatings, they may turn around and say "it wasn't that bad." Even in a treatment program they will alternate between full recognition of their violence to a denial that they have any problem with it. Thus, any treatment

program for these men requires that staff have access to corroborative data. Phone calls and weekly separate group meetings for family members serves this function in our treatment program.

The men who batter may or may not have a problem with drug and/or alcohol abuse. Some battering men do not drink or use drugs at all. One reported that he did not like the feeling of being out of control when drinking. Some have a drinking problem but batter whether they are drinking or not. Others batter *only* when drinking. In referring men to treatment programs, the issue of alcohol or drug abuse must be carefully assessed. Stopping the drinking will not necessarily stop the battering. For men who have both problems treatment should focus on both as separate but related issues. One does not necessarily cause the other. If the two cannot be dealt with simultaneously our preference has been to recommend the substance abuse treatment first. Often the men resisted looking at their battering as a problem until they had dealt with the drug or alcohol abuse.

## Violence Repeated

The men we have interviewed or seen in treatment have been violent in more than one relationship. For example, our small research sample of nine men had a total of twenty-one long term relationships, only three of which were not violent. It is our assumption that battering men will continue to be violent even if they change partners, unless a major change occurs within the individual men. It is not a matter of his finding the right partner who will solve his problem of assaulting others. Our experience has led us to believe that the violence is not a function of the intimate relationship but a function of how he expresses and resolves stress. In treatment there is an emphasis on stress reduction skills such as relaxation training and daily physical activities, accompanied by assertive skills training to increase non-aggressive communication and problem solving.

## Implications for Therapuetic Intervention

An understanding of these characteristics of battering men clarifies why traditional individual psychotherapy and traditional marital therapy do not seem to be effective interventions in domestic violence. In traditional individual therapy a great deal of stress is placed on the one to one therapeutic relationship between therapist and client. In order to assess change, the therapist needs to have an accurate picture of the batterer's emotional state and his behaviors. Typically the therapist does not seek external input from family members or client's peers. Without this corroborating data the therapist may become lost in the batterer's maze of verbal reports "that everything is fine now" because of minimization.

In traditional marital therapy the one to one therapeutic relationship is between the therapist and the couple as a unit. Usually the therapist does not see one member of the couple separate from the other. Thus, in such therapy one often finds that both members of the couple are minimizing or denying a great deal. The victim sees her survival as dependent on her supporting most everything the batterer says. Also, marital therapy as initial intervention may give a false impression that the violence is caused by the woman as well as by the man. While the woman may be contributing to the dysfunctions in the relationship, she is not responsible for his assaults. If both members of the couple want to improve the relationship then follow-up therapy is provided after he gains control of his violent behavior.

The design of treatment programs for batterers should not only reflect the characteristics of the batterers but also the specific goal of treatment. At the Domestic Assault Program of American lake Veterans Hospital, the primary goal is to stop the battering, not to improve the relationship. The batterer may or may not be in a marriage or intimate relationship upon admission. Our theoretical orientation is that violence is learned behavior. The focus is on the batterer's skills and deficits. This attention to behavioral deficits rather than to the psychodynamics of the batterer or the battering relationship provides clear guidelines for treatment and clear measures of change. The therapist routinely assesses how well the man is doing by noting changes in assertiveness skills, in use of timeouts and other arousal reduction techniques, in aborting jealous reactions, etc. Changes in his behavior are more significant than his self reports given the batterer's tendency to minimize.

## Court Directed Treatment and Follow-up

As previously noted, the men can be impulsive and this affects both their motivation to be in treatment and to follow through. The Domestic Assault Program at ALVAH is strictly voluntary. During stressful points of the program the veteran's first reaction was to leave the hospital and some did. Those who remained throughout the four week phase reported that they felt they had to stay until they officially finished the program or the spouse would divorce them. Thus, the main motivation appeared to be one externally provided by the victim or a family member. Initially the men may need an externally

directed motivation for remaining in treatment. However, expecting the victim, who also is in crisis, to provide consistent expectations which will motivate the offender is unrealistic. Court directed treatment would be one way to provide at least temporary external reasons for batterers to seek intervention. This court directed treatment should include an outpatient follow-up phase of at least a year. For men who remain in relationships with their victims, the follow-up phase is necessary to maintain anger control skills as they renegotiate a relationship without battering. This follow-up can include marital therapy to improve communication between the two. For men who no longer are in a relationship with the abused person, the follow-up phase should be long enough to include a period of time where he is involved in another significant, intimate relationship.

## Agency Issues

The reality of working with this particular population raises issues for the agency where such treatment programs are offered. Since domestic violence is just being recognized as a public concern, myths about the nature of the problem still abound. This lack of understanding about the violence isolates the offender from treatment. To break through this isolation, the agency first needs to educate its own staff. Sometimes a batterer or his victim are already utilizing general medical and/or mental health facilities but do not reveal the violence as part of their problems. In order to identify and to serve the clients more effectively, agencies should include specific questions about family violence as part of the intake interview. When that problem is uncovered, the batterer and his family should be referred to staff members who have developed treatment strategies specifically for this issue.

Secondly, in order to reach the batterers who have not sought any assistance before, the agency must provide education for the general public as well as for the potential referral sources. This education needs to cover not only information about domestic violence in general but also information about the agency's programs for batterers. This outreach requires an agency commitment of staff time for that purpose and a willingness to be visible in its use of the media. Agencies seeing victims or batterers report an increase in the number of clients seeking treatment following any media coverage on the problem or treatment programs. This indicates the effectiveness of media coverage. The messages to the batterer must be: (1) battering is destructive, will no longer be ignored and must stop; (2) battering is a learned rather than inherent response to stress; and (3) rather than feeling shame for what he has done, he must accept the responsibility for learning new and less destructive behaviors.

## Impact on Staff

Working therapeutically with batterers has an impact on staff. As mentioned before, batterers frequently demonstrate such characteristics as rapidly changing levels of treatment motivation, instant escalation of anger (sometimes directed toward therapist), their tendency to minimize any problems that may exist, or the generation of insight one day which is denied the next. These factors individually or in combination increase the probability of non-helpful therapist responses. A partial list of these responses are: anger toward client for not wanting to change; a total distrust of *anything* the client might say; the conviction that treatment can never succeed because of the nature of the problem or conversely the conviction that we, as therapists, are incompetent.

In addition, the potential for suicide or serious assault must be considered real and requires that the therapist carefully monitor this factor. However, in spite of the amount of caution that is exercised, it seems inevitable that any ongoing treatment program for batterers will experience a death by homicide or suicide. One implication of this reality is the likelihood of lawsuits and/or court subpoenas of staff and records. A more obvious implication is the emotional stress for the therapist in coping with the death of a client or his spouse. These and other factors often combine to result in staff "burnout". It is our conviction that the reduction of non-helpful responses to clients and the prevention of staff "burnout" is best accomplished by adjusting our level of expectations to approximate the reality.

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*The black eye may heal in a week, but the real scars of spouse abuse are more than skin deep.*

# Sticks and Stones Break More Than Bones

**Thomas McKenzie**

**Some of the episodes** begin like a John Le Carre novel. Cloak and dagger stuff. There are the furtive calls late at night and whispered conversation.

"He's asleep now. I think I can get away."

They arrange to meet at a familiar corner, a quiet supermarket lot, a bus stop. The woman is frightened, her eye discolored, her cheek bruised and swollen. Sometimes she wears only a bathrobe and has no shoes. Often she has her children by her side, their fears dulled by sleep.

Then the car arrives and spirits them all away.

Some women arrive at the Center for Victims of Family Violence this way. Others come more conventionally, by bus, in cabs, in the safety of a neighbor's car. But they share the same symptoms—uncertainty, a shattered self-image, the residue of terror. They've finally fled the incessant beatings, finally found sufficient courage to risk further anger.

Shelters for abused spouses are becoming more common across America because the problem is escalating. Men, who are occasion-

ally victims, could also find refuge here but few do. They have more options. Shelter victims are invariably female, often with young children.

How serious is this problem?

In his book, *Wife Beating—The Silent Crisis*, Richard C. Levy estimates that half of all the married women in the United States suffer physical abuse at the hands of their husbands. It's difficult to credit a statistic this high, but even if that percentage is somewhat inflated, it does reveal that such abuse has reached epidemic proportions.

In New York, complaints of abuse rose 40 percent from 1976 to 1978. One moderate-sized midwestern city had a caseload of 1300 wife-beating complaints last year, and authorities believe that only one out of ten victims seeks help.

Two causes stand out. The first is an ancient one—alcoholism. Excessive drinking is involved in a vast majority of the cases. The second reason is more modern. The husband may resent the new opportunities afforded to women. When the wife decides to return to school or lands a new job or makes any move toward independence, this could trigger violence.

Often the reasons are trivial. A meal wasn't on the table on time. Food wasn't cooked the way a husband preferred it. The wife made an expenditure without consulting the "authority."

Incredibly, a significant proportion of the women who are subsequently beaten for such imagined offenses blame themselves. They conclude they should have been more careful, more thorough, more docile. They are reminded constantly of their failures and begin to think they've merited punishment. Some even view it as God's judgment on their presumed sins. They accept the beatings until they are persuaded or driven to seek assistance.

Typically this pattern of violence begins shortly after marriage and escalates during periods of stress, such as pregnancy. Stillborn or brain-damaged children could result. Such consequences merely add to the conviction of guilt.

One social worker in Chicago contends that many battered wives were raped as children and grew up thinking of themselves as sinful.

"They feel like a piece of dirt because their families reacted as if they were soiled, unclean," she says.

The rationale varies but the guilt seems uniform. Even the stories of abuse echo one another.

"When he was drunk—only when he was drunk—he'd hit me. If I'd fight back, that made him angry and he hit me harder. Then I'd cry and sometimes he'd cry too."

One woman dozed in fear of a wakeful husband who kept a loaded shotgun pointed at her. A young teacher was often humiliated in the school playground by the boyfriend who fathered her child. Another woman is married to a crippled veteran who has been abusing her for years, using his condition to silence complaints.

These are not the very poor, the minorities. A significant portion of the women who flee to shelters are white and middle class. Most are under thirty; few over forty. At these centers they pay a small fee for room and board (although no one is turned away for lack of funds) share in the chores, and try to regain their dignity.

## The shattered self

Let's call the place River City, a metropolis of half a million on the Plains. It has three shelters for abused spouses—one run by the Salvation Army, one by the Rape Council, and a new one, named the Center for Victims of Family Violence, which opened in the fall of 1978. This most recent shelter can house 15 adults and children, and it's been full since its second day of operation.

The center functions 24 hours a day, keeping staff and volunteers busy with counseling, admittance procedures, and transportation. The accommodations are comfortable, not luxurious, much like the older dorms at some colleges. The location is secret, a hedge against the irate husband. If a woman reveals the site, she must leave. All contact comes via phone.

Counselees spend a minimum of one day here and a maximum of eight weeks.

"We like them to stay at least a week," explains a staff advisor. "It's hard to be much help in less time than that. And if the woman hasn't sorted things out by two months, there's probably little more we can accomplish."

Although this hostel is supervised by a nun, Sister Louise, most of its population is non-Catholic. Some victims even have difficulty relating to the religious and seek out the lay counselors. All of the dozen lay staff members are women, and they include both former victims and members of the National Organization for Women.

"We give preference to those in the most intolerable situations," confides Sister Louise in assessing admission procedures. "By the time they get here, some assertiveness may be present but not enough. We try to rebuild what the beatings have destroyed."

For some victims, this center represents a final chance. They've failed in their appeal to other authority figures. Police, sometimes attacked and often disappointed by the wife's reluctance to press charges, are wary of entering domestic struggles. Judges, who hear a litany of such cases, can become callous. Friends lose patience with the cycle of pain and forgiveness. Even priests and ministers have been largely ineffective.

"I spend most of my time working with marriages that are fouled up," one pastor protested. "You begin to wonder if any marriages are happy ones. It's an unpleasant duty. There are tears, often defiance by one or both parties, and you have the feeling that it's all going to happen all over again."

In fairness, few clergymen have been trained for such confrontation. They may focus on reuniting the couple, on trying to reconcile their differences, when they should be preaching separation. Bringing them back together may make the priest feel successful but it could be fatal to the abused spouse.

Victims are generally reluctant to contact their spiritual leaders. They're worried about how they'll be received. They're nearing despair and know their ideals are in conflict with those they've been taught.

"I was ashamed," confesses one 45-year-old mother of two. "I figured I failed. I'd been brought up to understand religion as producing harmony and peace. Yet there was no peace in my life. So how could I be religious?"

Another woman was schooled in religion as being the essence of love. Marriage was supposed to be the fulfillment, the epitome of this love. She found only pain. "It's so hard to love someone who doesn't love you back," she lamented.

Without love at this level, love at a higher level seems impossible. Not all women react this way, of course. Some discover their only hope in religion and may become fanatical in their devotion.

This can be more unhealthy than rejection," Sister Louise believes. "Religion becomes a sickness and you can't break through to their reality."

It's safe to say that most women who come to these centers are turned off on religion. "Very turned off," echoes Sister Louise.

She sees their state as something like that of the dying. First there may be denial, then resentment, then, in some cases, understanding.

"They may love God in some uncertain way but hate themselves," says Sister Louise. "Or they may hate God, too. Whatever their condition, we don't shove religion down their throats. We just try to establish their concept of self-worth. In itself that's a pretty religious idea."

## Relearning love

Through the coping sessions, generally on a one-to-one basis with the counselors, the women are confronted with the reality of their lives and challenged to examine their own behavior, the pattern of abuse, the causes, the prospects for change, the alternatives. No one is allowed to indulge in self-pity.

"They need some sort of spiritual growth," adds Sister Louise. "They need to learn how to give without feeling used." This is another Christian concept. These victims tend to

be self-centered but directed by others. The center staff works on making them self-directed and other-centered.

Sister Louise says she stays awake worrying about their spiritual needs but has concluded first things come first.

"When people are angry," she says, "they rarely turn to God."

They come here not even knowing their own feelings. One woman was so crushed, she lacked the confidence to even drive her car. Here they learn to assert themselves, to shed their sense of shame and guilt, to become cognizant of their own rights.

They may even learn to love in a different way.

Some begin the sessions declaring that they still love their husbands. "You just don't understand," they complain.

Syndicated columnist Bob Greene reported on an encounter with an abused spouse who couldn't leave her tormentor.

> I love him too much. Through all of this, I've never stopped loving him. I know he has a sickness and I know he's not getting better, and I know it doesn't make sense, but I can't turn against him. . . . Even when he starts to hit me, I just close my eyes and think of something else and wait until he gets it out of himself and he starts crying and everything is all right again.

The trick is to persuade them to reject this sort of behavior without reinforcing hostility toward all men. Conversations with other women at the center help. They realize how common the problem is and how weak their acceptance makes them. They begin to cope.

Church services are offered to all the women and transportation provided. There is no big demand for such ritual.

"I'll go back some day," they promise themselves.

The problem seems to be the ancient dilemma of evil in the world and the ability of a loving God to tolerate it. Many can't deal with this conflict, can't fathom the chaos that emerged from a sacrament such as marriage.

"The assumptions you start with color your experience," says Sister Louise. "I explain that God knows about evil but expects us to deal with it. Sometimes they can; sometimes they can't."

## The road back

Two women who graduated from the center floundered spiritually for years. Call them Delores and Sheila. Both have now returned to the Catholic Church—one exuberantly, one tentatively.

Delores had a father who was violently alcoholic. She hated him for what he did to her mother and the family. "Religion kept me sane during those years," she adds.

Then came college and rote attendance at Mass. "I lost contact with God," she admits.

When she married at 22, her spiritual disaffection grew. Her husband was also an alcoholic and she viewed this as her punishment for past failings. She became angry, bitter, and stopped going to church because what she was feeling contrasted so sharply with what was being preached. Twelve years later, after three children, she discovered Al-Anon, for the wives and relatives of alcoholics.

"They gave me back my spiritual life," she declares.

There's a lesson here. Many priests and ministers say they would rather step in at this point, when the victims have received professional help.

"One is best prepared to respond to religious questions," one pastor says, "when he or she has an emotionally stable situation."

Before one reaches this plateau, many lives follow the pattern of shock, fear, the sudden euphoria when one succeeds in getting some help, then anxiety, and finally a sense of reality. Somewhere in that scheme the victim generally suffers severe depression. Like John of the Cross and the dark night of the soul, they all sense they have struck bottom.

Sheila also married young, at 18, and also has three children.

"Have you ever experienced a miracle?" she asks. "I have."

She mentions a time when she and her husband were broke. Their car had been repossessed and an eviction notice was being served. Her husband, drunk, was useless.

"I was talking to my mother on the phone," Sheila recalls, "and I knew I should hang up. I knew that God wanted to talk to me. You won't believe this, but he told me about bankruptcy laws and how to file and even where I'd find a lawyer. I mean, I didn't know anything about these things. They all came to me. Specifics. When I told my husband, he thought I'd gone crazy. But I followed God's advice and we came out of it."

What was it like? The skeptic.

"It wasn't like talking and it came almost instantaneously, but I remembered everything that was said."

She finds she can experience this same light and peace whenever she prays to the Holy Spirit.

"It's a bright, glowing feeling. I remember feeling like that as a child, at Confirmation."

Delores agrees. She's an active charismatic and speaks in tongues.

"I've also spoken with God. He gives me biblical references which invariably comfort me."

What did this language sound like?

"Like Latin at first. That worried me. I thought I was parroting what I'd learned in school. I gave it up for a long time. Then I prayed for a new prayer language—and it was given to me. It sounds, well, like I imagine people spoke in the time of Christ."

Sheila had a harder time praying. She said she hurt too much. But she knew God was always there.

"I now have him in a way I've never had him before. It's not my mother pushing me to say prayers. I've met him on his own terms."

## One day at a time

Both women state they see a purpose in their suffering. They even consider it necessary to understanding. Both now turn to God for everything, "big or little."

"We follow the alcoholic code. We stay in today and don't think much about the future. The Lord has given me today. I can't tell you what I'll be doing next year," Delores calmly remarks.

Sheila adds, "It's a much more exciting way of life. A new way of living. I never know what God has in mind for me from day to day."

What about their husbands? Delores remains with hers; Sheila has gone through a recent divorce.

"My husband resents my closeness to God," admits Delores. "He never had such a personal relationship himself. Just went to church automatically. He laughs at me for saying God will help and he ridicules my Bible study and prayer group."

Do you pray for him?

"Of course."

Sheila is less certain.

"It's hard for me to pray for my husband. I keep thinking that, if he changes, he may want to come back. And I'm not sure I want him back. He did say once, 'if there is a God, he's certainly working for you; maybe some day he'll work for me.'"

For Delores, the Catholic Church has new meaning. She is comfortable in it and experiences continual fulfillment. Sheila is finding the adjustment tougher.

"I was brought up a Catholic, but when this trouble started and I kept going to Mass, I wouldn't go to communion. I felt unworthy. Finally I stayed away altogether. I even tried another church. When I decided to come back, I was angry because I was told I had to pay for CCD for my children. I didn't have much money at all.

"Then someone talked to the nun who taught the class and she let my children in. I used to think the Catholic Church was only for old people but I'm feeling better about it now."

Her first Sunday back was a near disaster.

"The priest stopped me at the door and asked who I was and whether I had just moved into the parish. I said I had been registered here a long time. And he asked me why I hadn't been coming to church. I couldn't answer him. I brushed right by and went into church. I almost turned around and went home."

For every pair of successes like these two women, there are countless failures. There must be millions who have been disappointed in the cruel charade of their marriages and who have either blamed God or felt ashamed of their relation to him. Many of them will never make the daily surrenders related by Delores and Sheila. Their dark nights stretch endlessly. Those at the shelters can hope only to begin the reversal of attitude, to make the victims appreciate their uniqueness in a chaotic universe. And while they're groping, will God be patient?

"God can handle it," says Sister Louise. "I just hope we can." □

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